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THE LITERATURE OF SOCIETY.

BY

GRACE WHARTON,

ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF "THE QUEENS OF SOCIETY," AND "THE WITS AND BEAUX OF SOCIETY."

With an Introductory Chapter on the Origin of Fiction.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER I.

DRYDEN'S BEST PATRON, SIR ROBERT HOWARD. — RISKS INCURRED BY THE POET. — ANECDOTE OF WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER. — DRYDEN'S MARRIAGE. — MRS. REEVES. — STATE OF THE STAGE.—LOVE OF CHARLES II. FOR IT. — PROSPERITY OF DRYDEN INTERRUPTED BY THE FIRE OF LONDON. —ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE FIRE.—PRESENCE OF MIND OF CHARLES II. — STATE OF THE CITY AND OF THE COURT. — CHANGE IN DRYDEN'S STYLE OF WRITING.

CHAPTER I.

DRYDEN now had gained a powerful patron to second those efforts, which, without being fostered by some friendly aid, might at that time have been utterly fruitless. The age, Sir Walter Scott remarks, 'afforded little encouragement for the ambitious labours of an epic poem;' and to fill up the measure of shame, the 'Paradise Lost' fell still-born from the press. The influential patron who befriended Dryden was Sir Robert Howard, a younger son of Thomas, Earl of Berkshire, and a distinguished Royalist. During the Commonwealth, Sir Robert had suffered a tedious and shameful imprisonment in Windsor Castle. He was not only a brave, but an intelligent man, who could well appreciate the mind of the poet, and who sought steadily to advance his fortunes.

But, although Dryden may be said at all times to have commanded 'the town,' as it was then styled, there had been passages in his career which showed the personal risks which a satirist in those times of ruffian violence incurred.

Encouraged, however, by Howard, Dryden's life now brightened, and with his expanding powers of mind the channels of his heart were also opened. In spite of his bitterness as a writer, Dryden is said to have been the gentlest of human beings. 'He had personal qualities,' Congreve tells us, 'to challenge both love and esteem from all who

were truly acquainted with him. He was of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate: easily forgiving injuries, and capable of a prompt and sincere reconciliation with them who had offended him. His friendship, where he professed it, went much beyond his professions. As his reading had been very extensive, so was he very happy in a memory tenacious of everything that he had read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than he was communicative of it. But then his communication of it was by no means pedantic or imposed upon the conversation; but just such, and went so far, as by the natural turns of the discourse in which he was engaged, it was necessarily prompted or required. He was extremely ready and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer who thought fit to consult him; and full as ready and patient to admit of the reprehension of others in respect of his own oversights or mistakes. He was of very easy, I may say of very pleasing access; but something slow, and as it were diffident in his advances to others. He had something in his nature that abhorred intrusion in any society whatsoever. Indeed, it is to be regretted that he was rather blameable in the other extreme; for by that means he was personally less known, and consequently his character might become liable both to misapprehensions and misrepresentations. He was of all the men that ever I knew one of the most modest and the most easily to be discountenanced in his approaches either to his superiors or his equals.'

With these advantages, and with the opportunities of an intimacy which is often more attainable to a dependent in a family of high rank than even to equals, what followed cannot be a matter of surprise; it was the old story—an attachment between the young secretary and his patron's sister, Lady Elizabeth Howard.

There is no evidence that this marriage was peculiarly objectionable to the Earl of Berkshire's family; on the contrary, Dryden resided for some time in the house of his

father-in-law, and it is from his lordship's seat in Wiltshire that he dates his 'Annus Mirabilis,' published in 1667.

The world, however, not comprehending that a poor author could be an acceptable addition to an earl's family, reported —but falsely—that the lady's character required the union to take place.

Such marriages are usually considered as proofs of luck in a young man's destiny. Among the many instances which show that, too often, an unequal marriage is the most injurious step that a gifted and energetic man can take, Dryden's case stands prominently forward. Putting aside the question of inequality—the question of how far a high-spirited man can *bear* such a position—it is, we contend, as adverse to his own worldly advancement, as it is, generally, dishonourable and imprudent, to engage the affections of a young lady so situated. Seldom does the high-born bride become the useful, suitable, and, therefore, happy wife, of a poor man. It is difficult, not only to erase in her mind the consciousness of having conferred an honour; it is next to impossible to obliterate the land-marks of those distinctions, the importance of which is implanted in the mind of the higher classes of this country, as a means of rising still higher, and as a safeguard against sinking lower in the scale of society.

Generally, too, it is the weak, or the plain, or the eccentric, or the ill-tempered women of noble families who are consigned with anything like a good grace to the respectable tutor, or the useful, talented secretary. Such was the case with Lady Elizabeth Howard. She appears to have been at once violent and feeble-minded; and, as such, as Sir Walter Scott well observes, unable 'to endure the apparently causeless fluctuation of spirits incident to one doomed to labour incessantly in the feverish exercise of the imagination.' (How feelingly those few words are penned.) 'Unintentional neglect,' he proceeds, 'and the inevitable relaxation, or rather sinking of spirit, which follows violent mental exer-

tion, are easily misconstrued into capricious rudeness or intentional offence; and life is embittered by mutual accusation, not the less intolerable because reciprocally just.'

A man will forgive much when his wife is either enthusiastically proud of his talents, or blind to his failures, even if his powers of mind be not first-rate; and almost the greatest hold that a woman can attain over man is, not through the medium of the senses, or even of the affections, but by an earnest, trusting, sensible sympathy in those pursuits, be they essential to his support or only ornamental to his prosperity, which occupy his existence. But of this Lady Elizabeth Howard had no comprehension; and in Dryden's burning verse we perceive the effects of this infelicitous union. 'I dismiss the disagreeable subject' (thus writes poor Sir Walter) 'by observing that on no one occasion, when a sarcasm against matrimony could be introduced, has our author failed to season it with such bitterness as spoke an inward consciousness of domestic misery.'

Probably there was jealousy on one side, as there was disgust on the other. The young 'Puritan,' as the satirists persisted in considering him, had, in his plain attire,—sometimes bordering on shabbiness,—and, when his Norwich drugget was almost threadbare, been distinguished by the attentions of the fair. He who, in after life, settled down into respectability, used to figure at the Mulberry Gardens in company with a beautiful actress named Reeves. 'I have eaten tarts with him and Madame Reeves, at the Mulberry Gardens,' writes (in 1745) the 'Gentleman's Magazine' 'old gentleman;'—'when our author advanced to a sword and Chudreux wig,' adds the venerable correspondent of the same periodical.

Mrs. Reeves was an actress who performed the chief parts in most of Dryden's plays; her husband, Mr. Reeves, is referred to by Pepys in the following sentence, characteristic of the hospitable, conceited Pepys. 'So to bed mighty

sleepy, but with much pleasure, Reeves lying at my house; and mighty proud am I, (and ought to be thankful to God Almighty,) that I am able to have a spare bed for my friends.'

On another occasion, Pepys, going to Whitehall on business, and staying, meets various acquaintances, among these 'Mr. Butler, that wrote "Hudibras;" and by-and-by came Mr. Reeves and his wife, whom I never saw before. And there we dined: a good dinner, and company that pleased me mightily, being all eminent men in their way. Spent all the afternoon in talk and mirth, and in the evening parted.'

Dryden is said to have written some of his characters expressly for Mrs. Reeves. Bayes in the 'Rehearsal,' talking of Amarillis, performed by this actress, says: 'Aye, 'tis a pretty little rogue; she's my mistress; I knew her face would set off armour extremely, and to tell you true, I wrote the part only for her.' In 1676, however, 'Madam Reeves' retired from the stage and hid her errors in a cloister. In the epilogue to Otway's 'Don Carlos,' that event is thus alluded to:—

> 'But now if by my suit you'll not be won,
> You know what your unkindness oft has done;
> I'll e'en forsake the playhouse and turn nun.'

'I wish,' says Dr. Johnson, 'there were no necessity for following the progress of Dryden's theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole series of his dramatick performances.'

It was indeed a task, even to one who deemed all mental labours mere every-day occupation, to criticise Dryden's dramatic efforts; for he wrote no fewer than twenty-eight tragedies; and he kept possession of the stage for many years. The history of the stage at this period is, in fact, a history of the court; for to attend the theatre,—so long closed in the days of Puritan ascendency,—was a mark of loyalty. Pepys seems to have thought it almost as great a

duty as going to church. But then the theatres were at that time very cheap; although rising in price:—witness the following entry in Pepys's Diary for 1664.* 'Thence I after dinner to the Duke of York's playhouse, and there saw "Sir Martin Mar-all," which I have seen so often, and yet am mightily pleased with it, and think it mighty witty, and the fullest of proper matter for mirth that ever was writ; and I do clearly see that they do improve in their acting of it. Here a mighty company of citizens, 'prentices, and others; and it makes me observe that when I began first to be able to bestow a play on myself, I do not remember that I saw so many by half of the ordinary 'prentices and mean people in the pit at 2*s.* and 6*d.* a piece, as now; I going for several years no higher than the 12*d.* and then the 18*d.* places, though I strained hard to go in when I did; so much the vanity and prodigality of the age is to be observed in this particular.'

One can easily conceive Pepys in his 'prentice days, loving pleasure, yet a prig. And, indeed, so scandalized was the careful, thriving Pepys at this enormous charge that he afterwards laid a wager that he would never enter a theatre whilst they were so dear; but cheated his conscience occasionally by letting a friend pay for him.

Dryden's plays were especially suited to the age of Charles the Second, and although Pepys calls 'The Rival Ladys,' 'a very innocent and most pretty, witty play,' (he saw it represented the night a friend paid for him,) the usual run of Dryden's tragedies is of such a description that we feel with Johnson, that the privilege of not analyzing them is a relief. Charles patronized tragedies in rhyme, constructed after the fashion of the French heroic plays; but Tom Killigrew set up what he called a nursery: that is a play-house in Moorfields, where 'he will,' says Pepys, 'have common plays

* Pepys, vol. ii. p. 174.

acted.' 'Bartholomew Fair' Pepys thought 'the best comedy in the world.'

The great solace and diversion of Charles, in his exile, had consisted in the provincial theatres with which even the smallest towns abroad are provided. He took a personal interest in theatres; he approved, if he did not prefer, those heroic plays in which the dialogue of the drama was 'frozen' by introducing into the theatre 'the etiquette of the drawing-room.'* Formerly it was considered a part of education to take the same view of the drama that Louis the Fourteenth introduced, and that Charles adopted. Every one visiting Paris thought it a duty to see one of these stilted, highly virtuous, heroic plays, and to weep, if you could, over the woes of 'les Horaces;' though they no longer figured before the audience, as they did in the days of Racine himself, in full-bottomed wigs. The famous Mademoiselle Clairon, in the next century—(who can ever forget Marmontel's description of her, with a jonquil wreath round her superb brow?) then, Mademoiselle Mars; and, latterly, the unhappy Rachel, racked by passion, in ours, might well reconcile their audience, if anything could, to a declamation which genius converted into a burst of personal feeling—witness Rachel's narrative in 'Phèdre'—but the acclamation, like the declamation, must have been unnatural and forced.

We turn gladly to those efforts of Dryden's muse in which the characters of the age are dealt with, and in which the bitter assault is often interrupted by passages of exquisite beauty and noble sentiment.

Two powerful patronesses, very different in character, abetted the favours enjoyed now at court by Dryden. One was the Countess of Castlemaine, afterwards Duchess of Cleveland; the other, Anne, wife of James, Duke of Monmouth, the ill-fated son of Charles the Second, and the 'Absalom' of Dryden.

* See Scott's Dryden.

The court was diverted by a quarrel between these great ladies when Dryden became the minister to its intellectual pleasures. Mary, the wife of James, fourth Duke of Lennox, and third Duke of Richmond, was related, by her father's side, to the termagant favourite of Charles the Second. These two ladies were cousins. The 'Lady Duchess of Richmond,' as she was called, was the daughter of George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham. The Countess of Castlemaine was the daughter of Lord Grandison, also a Villiers, and thus descended from a younger branch of that noble family: nevertheless my lady duchess called my lady countess 'Jane Shore,' and said, 'she hoped to see her come to the same end;' but matters were far from that point at this time; for, shortly after, Lady Castlemaine, quarrelling with her husband, set off for Richmond, taking her plate and jewels with her.

We will not follow Pepys in all his enthusiasm at my Lady Castlemaine's 'bravery,' nor in his gossiping with 'Mrs. Sarah,' my lord's housekeeper, nor in his spying from my lord's lodgings over Whitehall and the Bowling-green, where lords and ladies 'do play,'—nor of all the back-stairs news he loved so well—how, for instance, Lady Castlemaine had not left her lord one dish, one plate, one servant, save the porter. We will merely digress, just to dwell on the agony of worthier hearts than those of Pepys,—how Roger Palmer, indignantly bearing the title thrust upon him, wished to go off to France and enter a monastery; and how the queen, modest, innocent, gentle, wished 'to prick' Lady Castlemaine's name out of her list; and how the queen-mother—for the whole episode is the antecedent of George the Fourth and of Lady Jersey—countenanced Lady Castlemaine, and backed her up in the court.

It is no wonder that for such a patroness, and for such an audience, Dryden wrote plays which are quite unreadable in the present day.

On the 20th of April, 1663, Pepys, prowling about for gossip, observes the little Duke of Monmouth in his coach

going to Whitehall to be married. His coat (of arms) was at the tail of his coach, and the king's darling son was permitted, Pepys with virtuous horror perceived, to quarter the arms of England, Scotland and France, without any bar sinister that the worthy Samuel could discover.

The fête on this marriage was one of the most brilliant of Charles's reign. Monmouth was not only the delight of his father's weak heart, but that of the people, who, in those days, were not scandalized at the presence of the bar sinister.

De Grammont describes the Duke of Monmouth's personal appearance and character in the following terms:—

'His figure, and the exterior graces of his person, were such, that nature, perhaps, never formed anything more complete. His face was extremely handsome; and yet it was a manly face, neither inanimate nor effeminate; each feature having its beauty and peculiar delicacy. He had a wonderful genius for every sort of exercise, an engaging aspect, and an air of grandeur; in a word, he possessed every personal advantage; but then he was greatly deficient in mental accomplishments. He had no sentiments but such as others inspired him with; and those who first insinuated themselves into his friendship, took care to inspire him with none but such as were pernicious. Those who before were looked upon as handsome, were now forgotten at court; and all the gay and beautiful of the fair sex were at his devotion. He was particularly beloved by the king; but the universal terror of husbands and lovers. This, however, did not long continue; for nature not having endowed him with qualifications to secure the possession of the heart, the fair sex soon perceived the defect.'*

Such was poor Monmouth—a Stuart, it must be owned, in faults and follies, as well as in amiable traits of character. No action of James the Second excites more indignation—and

* De Grammont, vol. ii. p. 256.

that is saying much—than the hard, vindictive, capital punishment inflicted on a vain boy, who was misled by being the idol of his country.

Various inducements decided the king to conclude for his son a marriage with the Lady Anne Scott, the daughter and sole heiress of Francis, Earl of Buccleugh. She was beautiful and intellectual; with a fortune, stated at the lowest by De Grammont, of more than five thousand a year. She, in fact, had the superiority not only in fortune, but in those mental qualities in which the Adonis of the court, Monmouth, was deficient.

A grand ball followed the festivities at Whitehall, and every one remarked that, as the Duke of Monmouth was dancing with the queen with his hat in his hand, the king came in, kissed him, and made him put on his hat.

Pepys, 'at the King's House to see "The Wild Goose Chace," by Beaumont and Fletcher—sitting by Knipp, whose talk pleased him a little,' heard how finely the Duchess of Monmouth had acted in 'The Indian Emperor' at court; most of the other ladies being stocks and stones; but the praise is nullified in our minds, though not in his, by finding this newly married young girl for ever with Lady Castlemaine—sometimes with the king, 'mad in hunting a moth away from the candle.' In the midst of all her gaiety, fortunately, perhaps, for herself, the poor duchess broke her leg in 'trying of tricks in dancing,' and had, ever afterwards, one leg shorter than the other.

She continued to be Dryden's patroness. 'The Indian Emperor,' in which she had performed so ably, was eminently successful; and Dryden was engaged to write three plays a year for the King's House, sharing in the profits to the extent of three or four hundred pounds.

In respect rather to the Duchess than to the Duke of Monmouth, Dryden soon afterwards dedicated to him his 'Tyrannic Love,' comparing him to an Achilles, or a Rinaldo,

who only wanted a Homer or a Tasso to celebrate his fame. We shall see in what a different character Dryden afterwards painted his Grace.

Dryden now occupied as elevated a position as literature could insure to its most fortunate votary. He had many friends, and, at this period, few conspicuous enemies. Most of the lettered nobility of the day were his associates; the Duke of Ormond, the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Dorset, Lord Clifford, one of the Cabal, and Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, at this time, though he soon changed, were zealous in promoting his interests.

His happiest hours were perhaps passed in humbler, yet worthier associates;—the blameless, metaphysical Cowley, Denham, d'Avenant, Waller, and even Milton were among the chosen coterie to whom Dryden, in his dedication to the Assignation, alludes, recalling evenings of delicious communion with kindred minds; when conversation was neither too light, nor too serious;—always agreeable, often instructive; raillery, without censure; the memory of the absent, and the dead, respected; whilst the goblet went round often enough and potent enough to inspire wit, but not to disturb the business of the morrow.

'He had not yet,' says Sir Walter Scott,* 'experienced the disadvantages attendant on such society, or learned how soon literary eminence becomes the object of detraction, of envy, of injury, even from those who can best feel its merit, if they are discouraged by dissipated habits from emulating its flight, or hardened by perverted feeling against loving its possessors.' Soon, very soon, did Dryden's career exhibit plainly the truth of this mournful observation.

His prosperity was checked by the Great Fire of London, which occurred in 1666.

A recent conflagration, that in the Borough, has, in some

* 'Life of Dryden,' p. 114.

faint measure, brought home to us the horrors of that time on which Evelyn, on the 2nd of September, 1666, makes the following note in his Diary:—

'This fatal night began about ten, the deplorable fire near Fish Street, in London.'

On the 3rd he writes: 'The fire continuing, I took coach with my wife and sonn, and went to the Bankside in Southwark, where we beheld that dismal spectacle, the whole City in dreadfull flames near ye water side: all the houses from the Bridge, all Thames Street and upwards towards Cheapside, down to the Three Cranes, were now consumed.'

All that terrible night—a night light as day for ten miles round—a fearful east wind blew. It carried the flames from the south side of the City—from Cheapside to the Thames, and along Cornhill, Tower Street, Fenchurch Street, Gracechurch Street, and so on to Baynard's Castle—and it now caught St. Paul's Church. This—over the restoration of which Evelyn had been presiding—was surrounded with scaffolding. The king had lately repaired the exquisite portico; 'for structure,' says Evelyn, 'comparable to any in Europe. The people, paralyzed, stood and saw this grand old entrance burnt entirely, except the inscription on the architrave, which, showing by whom it was built, had not one letter defaced. Vast flakes of stone split asunder; the ornaments, friezes, and columns of Portland stone flew off to the very roof, where a great sheet of lead melted, and the ruins of the vaulted roof broke into St. Faith's: there was a store of books, which remained burning for a week afterwards.'* Evelyn thus describes the awe-struck despondency of the citizens, fortified by no master-mind, marshalled by no heroic, exalted Braidwood.

'The conflagration was so universal, and the people so astonish'd, that from the beginning, I know not by what de-

* Evelyn, vol. i., p. 372.

spondency or fate, they hardly stirr'd to quench it, so that there was nothing heard nor seen but crying out, and lamentations, running about like distracted creatures, without at all attempting to save even their goods, such a strange consternation there was upon them, so as it burned both in breadth and length the churches, public halls, Exchange, hospitals, monuments, and ornaments, leaping after a prodigious manner from house to house and street to street at great distances one from the other, for the heat, with a long set of faire and warm weather, had even ignited the air and prepared the materials to conceive the fire, which devour'd after an incredible manner, houses, furniture, and everything. Oh the miserable and calamitous spectacle! Such as haply the world had not seen the like since the foundation of it, nor can be outdone till the universal conflagration there. All the skie was of a fiery aspect, like the top of a burning oven, and the light seen about 40 miles round about for many nights. God grant mine eyes may never behold the like, who now saw above 10,000 houses all in one flame! The noise and cracking and thunder of the impetuous flames, ye shrieking of women and children, the hurry of people, the fall of towers, houses, and churches, was like an hideous storme, and the aire all about so hot and inflamed that at last one was not able to approach it. They were forc'd to stand still and let flames burn on, which they did for neere two miles in length, and one in bredth. The clouds also of smoke were dismale, and reached upon computation neare 50 miles in length. Thus I left it this afternoon burning, resemblance of Sodom on the last day. London was, but is, no more.'

Agitated entries now appear in the pages penned by one of the kindest-hearted of men. 'The fire still rages,' he writes, September 4th. It had reached the Inner Temple. Watling Street, that most ancient street, and its precincts were flaming. The stones of St. Paul's flew about like grenades; the melting lead from its roof ran like a stream through the

streets; the very pavements were glowing with a fiery redness, so that no passengers could proceed, no one go to help, or to stay the destruction. 'The eastern wind,' Evelyn writes, 'still more impetuously driving the flames forward. Nothing but the Almighty power of God was able to stop them, for vaine was the help of man.'

At Whitehall the greatest confusion prevailed. The fire was now extending towards that sinful and thoughtless corner of the doomed capital. Hitherto the frequenters of the court had stood like 'men intoxicated, with their hands across them;' they now aroused themselves. Charles—with greater sagacity than all the worshipful the mayor and aldermen put together—listened to the suggestion of blowing up a number of houses in order to produce a gap, instead of taking them down leisurely by machinery. This scheme had been proposed by some stout seamen early enough to have saved the whole city; but this, some of the selfish among the sufferers—and how large a class of that disposition is always seen in danger — opposed, as their houses must have gone first. The plan was now adopted; and to that we owe the remnant of old London that was spared.

There was one spot on which Evelyn's humane care centered. In St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and also in the Savoy, wounded and sick soldiers, who had suffered in the Dutch war, were harboured. These it was far more important to save,—Evelyn seems to have thought,—than the luxurious denizens of Whitehall.

After some time, the precautions thus adopted prevailed. Charles, in all the natural goodness of a heart not utterly selfish, was active in personal superintendence, 'labouring,' says Evelyn, 'as well as the duke, in person, and being present to command, order, reward, and encourage the workmen.' Meantime, a pitiful sight presented itself to every eye. The sufferers, many of whom were persons of wealth, were cowering into miserable hovels—being utterly ruined—with

scarcely a rag to cover them, nor a bed to rest upon. For days Evelyn could not walk along towards the city, the soles of his shoes being burnt through; but the hearts of the populace were reassured as they beheld, on the morning of the fifth day after the fire broke out, the royal barge gliding towards the Tower. Agonies of apprehension had been excited for days lest the White Tower should ignite. It held the magazine of powder, and had it been set on fire, every vessel in the river would have been demolished. Charles, however, saved it. Appearing at that spot, he caused every house near the old citadel to be razed to the ground. To him we owe that we have still that strong national fort—the mortar of which, so says tradition, was of old cemented with human blood, preserved to us. It seems destined to stand whilst England is a nation.

There is some pleasure in knowing that the court suffered paroxysms of alarm; one night a report arose that the French or the Dutch were invading London. The 28th of September arrived before the fire even began visibly to abate, and their terror to be allayed. Then people began to walk about the ruins, 'looking,' says Evelyn, 'like men in a dismall desert, or rather in some great citie laid waste by a cruel enemy.' Pepys, in a less exalted strain, tells us many homely little details à la Pepys, for which we are beholden to him; how the fire began at the king's bakers in Pudding Lane, and consumed Pie Corner. How, when he met my Lord Mayor and gave him the king's message that the houses should be pulled down, the mayor, 'looking like a man spent,' with a handkerchief round his neck, cried out: 'Lord! what can I do? I am spent; people will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses, but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it. So he left me and I him, and walked home.' Calm-minded Pepys! But he was active enough in carrying his own money and plate to Sir W. Batten's—he in his night-gown sitting in a cart: and, as usual, went to church

on the ensuing Sunday, and condemned the bad taste of the preacher, in saying that the city was 'reduced from folio to a decimo-tertio.' Pepys had composure of thought enough to tell us how and when he knew how his wife bought a dress at 15*s.* and 6*d.* a yard, and what a profit some wretches, whom he speaks of in pleasant, envying terms, made out of the miseries of others; a certain Mr. Pierce, a friend of Pepys, letting his wife's closet and 'the little blind bedchamber (not an attractive expression) for 50*l.* down, and 30*l.* per annum, and 40*l.* for dieting the master and two 'prentices.' As usual, Pepys could not help going to Whitehall, where he meets Evelyn, who sorrowfully made a striking comment on the state of public feeling, and the low standard to which it had sunk.

'He observes,' says Pepys, 'that none of the nobility came out of the country at all, to help the King, or comfort him, or prevent commotions at this fire; but do as if the King were nobody; nor ne'er a priest comes to give the King and court good counceil, or comfort the poor people that suffer; but all is dead, nothing of good in any of their minds; he bemoans it, and says he fears more ruin hangs over our heads.' Pepys is somewhat awe-struck, and going to church the following Sunday, and seeing not one handsome face in the church, begins to think, with Bishop Fuller, that a 'curse had fallen on the parish.'

The theatres were closed some time, and even during several years a shadow was over all the brightest hopes of literary men. About a month after the fire had ceased, we find, however, the theatre at Whitehall again opened; and the king, queen, duke, and duchess, and all the great ladies of the court, ('which was indeed,' says Pepys, 'a fine sight') listening to an ill-done representation of Etherege's silly play of 'Love in a Tub.' The sight of the ladies indeed was exceeding noble; and, above all, my Lady Castlemaine, 'whom,' says Pepys, on another occasion, 'I doe love.' There was a fast-

day on account of the fire; but, whilst 'sights so noble' as these were to be seen, and Lady Castlemaine's audacious wickedness was paramount, neither fires, nor pestilence, nor solemn fasts could do much to arouse the court to a sense of its own depravity. A change, meantime, was taking place in Dryden's predilections, and the part which he took in the 'Literature of Society,' and his contributions to it, became more prominent and various.

CHAPTER II.

DRYDEN'S CIRCUMSTANCES.—IS MADE POET LAUREATE.— HIS PROLOGUE MAKING. — HIS ENEMIES. — SOUTHERNE; HIS SINGULAR FATE. — HIS LOVE OF MUSIC. — SETTLE; HIS TRAGEDY OF 'THE EMPRESS OF MOROCCO.' — DRYDEN'S CRITICISM ON HIM. — GEORGE VILLIERS, SECOND DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM; HIS PLAY OF 'THE REHEARSAL.'— DRYDEN'S REVENGE ON VILLIERS. — THE EARL OF ROCHESTER'S OUTRAGE ON THE POET. — LORD MULGRAVE, THE REAL AUTHOR OF THE 'ESSAY ON SATIRE.' — THE LINES ON 'SAUNT'RING CHARLES.' — 'ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL;' EXTRACTS FROM THAT POEM. — DRYDEN'S CONVERSION TO ROMANISM. — RETIREMENT FROM PUBLIC LIFE. — DIES IN INDIGENCE. — THE STORY OF HIS BURIAL. — HIS CHARACTER.

CHAPTER II.

DRYDEN, on the death of Sir William Davenant, had been made poet laureate, with a salary of one hundred pounds a year—since Charles the First had augmented it from a hundred marks to that sum—and a tierce of wine; 'a revenue,' says Johnson, 'in those days not inadequate to the convenience of life.'

Yet, if the most indefatigable labour be a proof of necessity, Dryden must ever have been necessitous. Each of his twenty-eight tragedies was mostly written in six weeks, or even in a month. 'Want of time,' says Johnson, 'was often his excuse; or, perhaps, shortness of time, was his private boast in the form of an apology.'

It might have been supposed that such industry must have insured a competency. But to Dryden's prosperity there were many serious obstacles in the state of the times. The theatres, how patronized soever by the nobility, were avoided by the greater portion of the middle classes, who, even if they were not Puritans, reprobated the gross licentiousness of Dryden's plays. Each representation brought him one hundred pounds, not more; and seldom was Dryden allowed more than the profits of a single night. Almost every piece had a dedication, 'written,' says the almost infallible Johnson, 'with such elegance and luxuriance of praise as neither

haughtiness nor avarice could resist.' 'Dryden,' he adds, 'made flattery too cheap. That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known.' He prefaced his works, however, on their publication, each with a treatise on criticism, which much improved the public judgment. Dryden told Swift that he regretted the success of his own remarks, for 'he found his readers made suddenly too skilful to be easily satisfied.'

He was almost the universal prologue-maker, two guineas being his usual price. When asked to write one for Mr. Southerne, he ventured to ask three: 'Not,' said he, 'young man, out of disrespect to you, but the players have had my prologues too cheap.' Such is Dr. Johnson's statement. But by others the price of a prologue to the *profession* is said to have been five guineas; to Southerne—a thriving young poet,—ten; Southerne was then high in the favour of James, Duke of York, and always a stanch supporter of the Stuarts; he was a B.A. of Oxford, a Templar; he had the *prestige* of being a native of Shakespeare's town, Stratford-on-Avon; and, though his plays are long since forgotten, they were more profitable than those of Dryden. He condescended, it is said, to apply to persons of rank to take his tickets, which he sold at a high price, so that a night, or a performance, brought him in 700*l.*, when poor Dryden had only 100*l.* Pope refers to him as

> 'Southerne born to raise
> The price of prologues and of plays.'

It was the singular fate of Southerne—be it remarked *en passant*—to witness two revolutions. Born in 1662, he saw the revolution of 1688, and, indeed, took a part in it, being a lieutenant in the Duke of Berwick's regiment. In 1715—when he was still in middle age—the first insurrection in favour of James Stuart the Chevalier occurred. Dying in 1746, Southerne just survived the attempt of Charles Edward to regain the throne of his ancestors. Southerne's 'Innocent Adultery'—a play with a title very characteristic of the court

of Charles the Second—is said to have been the most moving in our language. Long might the old man, in his latter days, be seen listening to the quire in Westminster Abbey, for he was a great lover of music, and revolving past days in his mind.

Southerne excited Dryden's envy—but a new rival almost drove the excitable dramatist to frenzy. This was Elkanah Settle, whose dramas have not for years been acted—and probably they will never be revived.

Settle had produced, with sculptures (or illustrations?) a tragedy, called 'The Empress of Morocco.' The name is not promising, but it had a great success, and the ladies at Whitehall—Dryden's exclusive patronesses—acted it. Settle also prefixed a preface, in a sort of defiance of Dryden. 'Glorious John' dipped his pen into gall, and wrote away as fast, as coarsely, and as bitterly as possible. His friends say he had a natural delicacy of mind,—read his plays and see if you can accord with them: but, argue they, he was the gentlest creature in the world,—recall the long-forgotten attack upon Elkanah Settle, couched in the following terms: 'He's an animal,' he says, 'of a most deplored understanding, without conversation. His being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought, which he can never fashion into wit, or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly bad, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding.' Dryden then burlesques a poetic epistle of Settle's, Dryden's lines beginning—

> 'Great boy, thy tragedy and sculptures done,
> From press, and plates, in fleets do homeward run,
> And, in ridiculous and humble pride,
> Their course in ballad-singers' baskets guide;
> Whose greasy twigs do all new beauties take,
> From the gay shows thy dainty sculptures make.'

Such was the wretched criticism to which Dryden stooped. So true it is, as Johnson says, 'that minds are not levelled in their powers, but when they are first levelled in their desires.

Dryden and Settle had both placed their happiness in the claps of multitudes.'

Hitherto Dryden's contests had been of a private character, but now, in a ferment of political agitation, it became necessary for him, as a servant of the king, to employ his transcendent powers in supporting the court.

From the time of the Restoration, he had been a warm supporter of the monarch. It is true that, in his play of 'The Spanish Friars,' dedicated by a Protestant poet to a Protestant minister, Dryden had offended James, Duke of York; but the heir apparent was propitiated by a prologue; and Dryden was stimulated by every motive to propitiate the unpopular James.

Amongst the opposing party, the chief ornament of what was then assuming the form and title of the famous Cabal, was George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham.

It was in 1664-5, that the inimitable play of 'The Rehearsal,' written chiefly by that all-accomplished reprobate, was rehearsed with a view to its being brought upon the stage. The plague broke out,—and 'The Rehearsal' lay dormant in the green-room until 1671, when it was produced. The principal part was at first called Bilboa, and was meant to portray Sir Robert Howard. But political enmities taking a new turn, the Duke made Dryden the subject of his satire, and called the character Bayes. A host of small versifiers, Shadwell and Settle at their head, flew out like birds from their roost as the screech-owl is heard, and abetted in the general onslaught upon the King, the Duke, and the Laureate.

There were many touches in the personal satire which are thought to have pointed it to Dryden. Bayes, Dr. Johnson suggests, may have imitated the dress, and mimicked the customary exclamations of Dryden. One little trait looks like personality. Dryden had a practice of being bled when he was about to write,—as Burke had of placing a

blister between his shoulders when he was to make a speech. The constitution of the one required depletion; of the other stimulating; neither of them began operations without his habitual precaution.

Dryden's revenge, and the character he drew of the duke as Zimri, (in 'Absalom and Achitophel'), are thus noticed by Horace Walpole:

'Dryden's,' he says, 'is an admirable portrait, but Bayes an original creation; Dryden satirized Buckingham; Villiers, in "The Rehearsal," made Dryden satirize himself.'

And this was not the first time—for the duke being present when one of Dryden's plays was performed, when an actor exclaimed,—

'My wound is great, because it is so small,—

cried out:

'Then 'twould be greater, were it none at all.'

A sally of wit much commended by Walpole.

Amongst Dryden's former friends, and present foes, was Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. That brilliant man, destitute of one iota of character in the court of Charles, at all events, had influence enough to do harm and to exalt the reputation of a weak writer over that of the great Dryden. He took the objectionable Elkanah Settle under his protection, and thus, stimulated by revenge, Rochester succeeded in raising up for a time an inferior and contemptible writer, in opposition to the illustrious Dryden.

In 1673, Dryden and Rochester had been on amicable terms; and Dryden had dedicated his 'Marriage à la Mode' —his own favourite play, and no unsuitable subject—to the fickle earl. Six years after Dryden had written his dedication in terms of glowing gratitude to Wilmot, the 'Essay on Satire,' which had been written in 1675, was distributed in manuscript. It was ascribed to Dryden; and Rochester, in writing to his friend Saville, and sending him, at the same

time, the manuscript, says: 'I have sent you herewith a libel, in which my own share is not the least. The king, having perused it, is no way dissatisfied with his. The author is, apparently, Mr. Dr—(yden,) his patron, Lord M—(ulgrave,) having a panegyric in the midst.'

In another letter, Rochester wrote in this unworthy, petty strain: 'You write me word that I'm out of favour with a certain poet, whom I have admired for the disproportion of him and his attributes. He is a rarity which I cannot but be fond of, as one would be of a hog that could fiddle, or a singing owl. If he falls on me at the blunt, which is his very good weapon in wit, I will forgive him if you please; and leave the repartee to Black Will, with a cudgell.'

This disgusting threat was soon put into execution. On the 18th of December, 1679, at night, Dryden, when walking home from Wills's Coffee-house to his own house in Gerard Street, Soho, passed through Rose Street, Covent Garden. There he was assaulted, and shamefully beaten by hired ruffians, amongst whom 'Black Will' doubtless figured conspicuously. A reward of 50*l.* was offered in the 'London Gazette,' for the discovery of the assailants; and pardon was promised to any accessory, even to a principal if he would turn king's evidence. But no disclosure followed this announcement; neither was it likely, for Rochester's bribes were probably far higher than the reward offered.

The world, however, fixed on Rochester as the author of this cowardly attack, and the name of the Duchess of Portsmouth, who had been attacked in the 'Essay on Satire,' was whispered in connection with the outrage, as one of its instigators. The civil war, Sir Walter Scott perhaps justly thinks, had left the traces of ferocity among the people. *La Fronde,* in France, is said to have had that effect also. The absence of all delicacy in women, was certain, almost, to be accompanied by the depreciation of honour and humanity in men—witness the murder of Lord Shrewsbury by Bucking-

ham, his wife's paramour; by no means a solitary outrage in that and the reign following. English gentlemen's code of honour is doubtless much improved in our own boasted times, more especially within the last thirty years. Yet we blush to recall, that little more than thirty years ago, an incident too closely resembling the vicarious punishment of Dryden took place by daylight, and in one of the crowded streets of the metropolis. Dryden's conduct to Rochester was marked by the forbearance of contempt. Perhaps the remorseful death-bed, the expiation of slow decay, the former good offices of Rochester, had their influence on the poet's great mind. Whilst living, Rochester experienced no revenge at the hands of Dryden; when dead, clemency was shown to his memory.

In the preface to the translation of Juvenal, Rochester is referred to as a man of quality whose ashes Dryden was unwilling to disturb; and in the same Essay, Dryden takes credit for resisting opportunities of revenge even on those at whose hands he had most suffered.

Lord Mulgrave, who was the real author of the 'Essay on Satire,' though it *may* have been retouched by Dryden, refers, as Scott indignantly expresses it, in a 'flat and conceited couplet' to the blows which ought to have fallen, not on Dryden's shoulders, but on his own. In his 'Art of Poetry' he writes:—

> 'Though praised and punished for another's rhymes,
> His own* deserve as great applause *sometimes*.'

And in a note is added: 'A libel, for which he was both applauded and wounded, though entirely ignorant of the whole matter.' One scarcely knows which is the worst in point of feeling, the couplet or the note.

Sir Walter Scott calls the whole 'Essay on Satire' a mere stagnant level, no one part of it rising so far above the

* Dryden's.

rest as to bespeak the work of a superior hand.' The ideas are poorly expressed, a fault never to be ascribed, he remarks, 'to the beautiful language of Dryden.' There is other internal evidence of the same conviction that the Essay was not Dryden's. Charles, in whose royal household Dryden held a place, is harshly treated. So is Sedley, with whom Dryden was on good terms. The lines which we conclude were applied to 'saunt'ring Charles,' do certainly well hit off his character, but are not such as a poet laureate would dare to write of a reigning monarch:

> 'First, let's behold the merriest man alive,
> Against his careless genius vainly strive;
> Quit his dear ease, some deep design to lay
> 'Gainst a set time, and then forget the day;
> Yet he will laugh at his best friends, and be
> Just as good company as Nokes and Lee.
> But when he aims at reason, or at rule,
> He turns himself the best to ridicule;
> Let him at business ne'er so earnest sit,
> Show him but mirth, and bait that mirth with wit;
> That shadow of a jest shall be enjoyed
> Though he left all mankind to be destroyed.'

These are perhaps the best lines in a malignant, coarse, and feeble satire,—said by some to have been revised by Pope. Henceforth, throughout all Dryden's decline of life, the Rose Street cudgel ambuscade was a subject of sneer and opprobrium, although no man, how valiant soever, could resist an attack of four or five ruffians well enured to their office; and Dryden's name becomes mixed up with the political affairs which were so complicated in those times, that it almost requires a separate history of the Cabal to comprehend the ravelled chain and intricate tissue of that plot.

Dryden's celebrated poem, 'Absalom and Achitophel,' appeared just after Anthony Ashley, first Earl of Shaftesbury, had been committed to the Tower, and when a bill was in preparation to be preferred against him for high treason.

The reception of the poem was eager in the extreme; and Dr. Johnson's father, an old bookseller, who remembered it, told his son that the sale was so rapid, he could compare nothing to it, except in later days that of the trial of Dr. Sacheverell.

Addison ascribes this immediate popularity to the personality of the poem, and to the delight which the mind always feels in the investigation of secrets. 'There is no need,' says the stern Johnson, displeased at this faint praise, 'to inquire why those verses were read, which, to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the co-operation of all the factious passions, and filled every mind with triumph or resentment.'

Dryden's idea in this famous poem was borrowed from a paraphrase of the scriptural story of Naboth's Vineyard, composed by a Catholic poet in 1679, and applied to the Popish Plot, and the condemnation of Lord Stafford.

The character of Monmouth, as Absalom, is touched with great delicacy, and though leniently, with evident truth as well as felicity.

'Of all the numerous progeny was none
So beautiful, so brave, as Absalom.

* * * *

Early in foreign fields he won renown,
With kings and states allied to Israel's crown.
In peace, the thoughts of war he could remove,
And seem'd as he were only born for love.
Whate'er he did was done with so much ease
In him alone 'twas natural to please;
His motions all accompanied with grace,
And Paradise was opened in his face.
With secret joy indulgent David view'd
His youthful image in his son renew'd;
To all his wishes nothing he denied,
And made the charming Annabel his bride,
What faults he had (for who from faults is free?)
His father could not, or he would not see.

Thus praised and loved the noble youth remain'd,
While David undisturbed in Zion reign'd;
But life can never be sincerely blest,
Heaven punishes the bad, and proves the best.'

The Jews, (or English,) a 'headstrong, moody, murmuring race,' became discontented.

'These Adam-wits, too fortunately free,
Began to dream they wanted liberty.'

After describing the state of factions, and how they were suddenly excited—

'For as when raging fevers boil the blood,
The standing lake soon floats into a flood,
And every hostile humour, which before
Slept quiet in its channels, bubbles o'er;
So several factions from this first ferment
Work up to foam, and threat the government'—

he draws a masterly portrait of Anthony Ashley;—a man as dreaded, as hated by his contemporaries, as any member of the Cabal. It is an inimitable delineation, for it displays a skilful mixture of praise and blame: it has an appearance of candour which heightens the bitter satire so wonderfully conveyed in these lines:—

'Of these the false Achitophel was first,
A name to all succeeding ages curst,
For close designs, and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit.
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place,
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay,
A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleased with the dangers when the waves went high,
He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide,

Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease,
And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeathered two-legg'd thing, a son.

* * * * *

In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin, or to rule the State;
To compass this, the triple bond he broke,
The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke.
Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves, in factious times,
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.
How safe is treason, and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the people's will!'

Achitophel, weary of possessing

'A lawful fame and lazy happiness,'

enters into deep intrigues and plots.

'Now, manifest of crimes contrived long since,
He stood at bold defiance with his prince,
Held up the buckler of the people's cause
Against the crown, and skulked behind the laws.'

His machinations are then described; the unhappy Monmouth, or Absalom, their object:—

'Achitophel still wants a chief, and none
Was found so fit as warlike Absalom.'

Absalom, he knew, would, from his infirm title to the crown—or rather, from the absence of any true claim—be always dependent for popularity on the lower classes, and thus draw down to democracy the kingly power. His address to Absalom, beginning

'Auspicious prince, at whose nativity
Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky,'

is a masterpiece of art and flattery, highly characteristic of Ashley.

The effect on Monmouth's weak mind is as skilfully drawn as it is beautiful in expression:

> 'What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,
> When flattery soothes, and when ambition blinds?
> Desire of pow'r, on earth a vicious weed,
> Yet sprung from high, is of celestial seed:
> In God 'tis glory; and when men aspire,
> 'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire.
> Th' ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,
> Too full of angels' metal in his frame,
> Unwarily was led from virtue's ways,
> Made drunk with honour, and debauch'd with praise.'

'Unhappy Absalom;' true, indeed, were the lines:—

> 'How happy had he been, if Destiny
> Had higher placed his birth, or not so high!
> His kingly virtues might have claim'd a throne,
> And blest all other countries but his own.'

Achitophel then resolves to unite all factions,

> 'The malcontents of all the Israelites;'

and in the enumeration of the partisans whom he thus joined in one cause, two celebrated portraitures appear in vivid, indelible colours. Zimri and Shimei stand prominently forward.

Attacked as Zimri, or George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, was, from personal motives, the most indifferent observer could not have drawn his character with greater impartiality and truth than Dryden.

After enumerating, amongst other malcontents, those who

> 'Thought kings an useless heavy load,
> Who cost too much, and did too little good,
> These were for laying honest David by,
> On principles of pure good husbandry,'

summing up the whole as

> 'A whole Hydra more
> Remains of sprouting heads too long to score,'

he adds:—

> 'Some of their chiefs were princes of the land;
> In the first rank of these did Zimri stand—
> A man so various, that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
> Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
> Was everything by starts, and nothing long.
> But in the course of one revolving moon
> Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
> Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
> Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
> Blest madman! who could every hour employ
> With something new to wish, or to enjoy.
> Railing and praising were his usual themes,
> And both, to show his judgment, in extremes;
> So over-violent, or over-civil,
> That every man with him was god or devil.
> In squandering wealth was his peculiar art,
> Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
> Beggar'd by fools, whom he still found too late,
> He had his jest, and they had his estate.
> He laugh'd himself from court, then sought relief
> By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief;
> For, spite of him, the weight of business fell
> On Absalom and wise Achitophel.'

He then dismisses the rest of the faction, as

> 'Titles and names 'twere tedious to rehearse
> Of lords, below the dignity of verse.
> Kind husbands, and mere nobles all the rest;'

and the rascal rabble, Shimei and Corah, are all among the 'friends of every sort' to delude Absalom, and induce him to forsake the court.

In the midst of this powerful satire, an exquisite apostrophe to the memory of the gallant Earl of Ossory relieves the strained feelings of the reader. The panegyric on Lord Ossory touches the heart the more deeply that it was so entirely merited. Evelyn, his oldest friend, relates how that Lord Ossory had been stung to the quick by a proposal to send him with an unequal force to relieve Tangiers. 'I would

go,' he said, 'if his Majesty commanded me, with ten men, but I cannot bear up against this unkindness;'—so sensitive was the gallant subject, with whose loyalty Charles thus trifled. Ossory was seized with a malignant fever; he became delirious, yet in the intervals of reason, received the Holy Communion; then sank away, and died. Evelyn stayed, he tells us, 'night and day by his bed-side to his last gasp, and closed his dear eyes.'

Dryden thus immortalizes this brave nobleman, happy, at all events, in two such friends, Dryden and Evelyn.

'His eldest hope, with ev'ry grace adorned,
By me (so Heaven will have it) always mourned,
And always honour'd, snatch'd in manhood's prime,
B' unequal fates, and Providence's crime;
Yet not before the goal of honour won;
All parts fulfilled of subject and of son;
Swift was the race, but short the time to run.
O narrow circle, but of power divine,
Scanted in space, but perfect in thy line!
By sea, by land, thy matchless worth was known,
Arms thy delight, and war was all thy own;
Thy force infus'd the fainting Tyrians propped,
And haughty Pharaoh found his fortune stopped.
Oh! ancient honour! oh! unconquered hand,
Whom foes unpunished never could withstand!
But Israel was unworthy of his name,
Short is the date of all immoderate fame;
It looks as Heaven our ruin had design'd,
And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind.
Now, free from earth, thy disencumbered soul
Mounts up, and leaves behind the clouds and starry pole,
From thence thy kindred legions mayst thou bring,
To aid the guardian angel of thy king.'

Dr. Johnson, referring to the poem of 'Absalom and Achitophel,' complains that after all the characters are arrayed, and the interest excited, a speech from the throne has the 'marvellous effect of reconciling all parties and subduing the whole phalanx of opposition.'

Certainly in this poem we want a catastrophe; but Dryden

has thus explained the deficiency in his preface. He owns, in the first place, that he could 'write severely with more ease than gently.' The violent, he owned, would condemn the character of Absalom, yet it was not the 'violent he wished to please. David himself,' he added, 'could not be more tender of the young man's life than *he* was of his reputation.'

The conclusion of the story was not given, 'because the poet could not obtain from himself to see Absalom unfortunate. The frame of it,' he added, 'was cut out but for a picture to the waist, and if the draught be so far true, 'tis as much as I designed. Were I the inventor, who am only the historian, I should certainly conclude the piece with the reconcilement of Absalom to David; and who knows but this may come to pass? Things were not brought to extremity when I left the story; there seems yet to be room left for a composure, hereafter there may be only for pity. I have not so much as an uncharitable wish against Achitophel, but am content to be accused of a good-natured error, and to hope, with Origen, that the devil himself may at last be saved; for which reason, in this poem, he is neither brought to set his house in order, nor to dispose of his person afterwards as he in wisdom shall think fit.'

David's speech at the close of the poem was commended, it is said, by Charles; and the success of Absalom and Achitophel was so great that the king had again recourse to Dryden's aid, and offering him a hundred broad pieces for the task, entrusted him with the office of putting down sedition. 'The Medal,' a satire against sedition, was the result.

Before we quit Dryden's 'Absalom and Achitophel,' it is necessary to state that a key was published with it some time afterwards. A few of the characters, besides those already specified, are important to be known, such as Abdael, General Monk; Agag, Sir Edmundbury Godfrey; Amri, the then Lord Chancellor Finch; Corah, Titus Oates; Michael,

Queen Katherine; Saul, Oliver Cromwell; and Shimei, Sheriff Bethel.

The services of Dryden to the royal cause met with but a variable, and often inefficient repayment, whilst other friends were offended, and avoided the poet. At length Dryden, feeling the evils of poverty most—as we all do, when they begin to affect our children—wrote to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, the King's uncle, a remonstrance, in which he thus alluded to his family.

After pleading his services, he says: 'My conscience assures me that I may write boldly, though I cannot speak to you. I have three sons, growing up to man's estate; I breed them up to learning beyond my fortune, but they are too hopeful to be neglected, *though I want.* Be pleased to look on me with an eye of compassion: some small employment would make my condition easy.' His salary as laureate had been in arrears, henceforth it was paid from a 'bare treasury,' as Dryden wrote; 'and Gideon's fleece has there been moistened when all the ground was dry.' 'Such,' writes Sir Walter Scott, in his honest enthusiasm for Dryden, 'was the recompense of the merry monarch and his connections to one whose productions had strengthened the pillars of his throne, as well as renovated the literary taste of the nation.'

Charles the Second died, and Dryden occupied himself with a Masque, 'Albion Albanus:' it had been commenced before the late king's short illness, and the performance was going on when news arrived that the Duke of Monmouth had landed to invade England at Lyme in Dorsetshire. The audience immediately left the theatre, and the piece was never brought on the stage again.

Soon after the accession of James, Dryden professed his conversion to Romanism. Interested motives, of course, have been assigned for a change of faith so remarkable at such a moment; but it had probably been a long-cherished conviction in the heart of the poet. Two classes of persons

are the most liable to the misfortune—for such I must consider it—of returning into darkness out of the pure light of the Reformation. These are the very thoughtless, who have never comprehended the reasons of their faith;—and the puritanical; and in most of the conversions which have taken place in our own time such has been the case, with some remarkable, but few exceptions. Dryden, in his 'Hind and Panther,' has touchingly referred to those circumstances which palliated his renunciation of the Church of England.

> 'My thoughtless youth was winged with vain desires,
> My manhood, long misled by wand'ring fires,
> Followed false lights; and, when their glimpse was gone,
> My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
> Such was I, such by nature still I am,
> Be thine the glory, and be mine the shame.'

With this part of Dryden's life we have little to do, or with the work in which the exposition of doubts, previous to his change, was drawn up—his '*Religio Laici*.' Sir Walter Scott, always benign, always wise, believes that Dryden's conversion relieved him from the misery of Deism, or, at all events, of doubt. 'He did not unloose,' he says, 'from the secure haven to moor in the perilous road; but being tossed on the billows of uncertainty, he dropped his anchor in the first moorings to which winds, waves, and perhaps an artful pilot chanced to convey his bark.'

Dryden's 'Ode on St. Cecilia,' for her festival, and his 'Ode on the Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew,' were the only pieces of general poetry which he composed for several years. Inspired by the fine hymns of the Catholic ritual, he translated the favourite hymn of St. Francis Xavier, '*Veni, Creator Spiritus*,'—a magnificent composition. To Dryden is ascribed the translation of the Te Deum retained in our churches, and of another hymn, that of the Vigil of St. John.*

'We have been fortunate,' says Scott, 'to have retained one

* Sir Walter Scott's 'Life of Dryden,' vol. i. p. 343.

of those simple and beautiful hymns of the Catholic ritual, the only pieces of uninspired sacred poetry which are worthy of the purpose to which they are dedicated. It is impossible to hear the '*Dies Iræ*,' or the '*Stabat Mater dolorosa*,' without feeling that the stately simplicity of the language—differing almost as widely from classical poetry as from that of modern nations—awes the congregation, like the architecture of the Gothic cathedrals in which they are chanted. The ornaments which are wanting to these striking effusions of devotion are precisely such as would diminish their grand and solemn effect; and nothing but the cogent and irresistible propriety of addressing the Divinity in a language understood by the whole worshipping assembly, could have justified the discarding these magnificent hymns from the reformed worship.'*

Dryden's sanguine nature supported him during the terrors of James's short reign, and in the crisis of the Revolution. He hailed the birth of the little Prince of Wales, 'that son of prayers,' as prophesied in the dedication to Xavier in his 'Britannia Rediviva;' but all his hopes were suddenly blighted by the abdication of King James.

That event was followed by the dismissal of Dryden from the laureateship, and the appointment of the Nonconformist Shadwell in his place. The trial must have been poignant. In his poem, 'Mac Flecknoe,' Dryden had elevated Shadwell to the highest pinnacle in the realm of nonsense, making Flecknoe exclaim:

> 'Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he
> Who stands confirmed in full stupidity;
> The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
> But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
> Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
> Strike thro', and make a lucid interval;
> But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
> His rising fogs prevail upon the day.'

* Scott, 242.

Dryden was now exposed to every species of insult from those who sought to court the power on the throne. He was accused of having been among those who paid secret visits to the camp at Hounslow, to further the hopes which James the Second still cherished, of raising a counter-action in his favour.

Shadwell, presented to King William by Lord Dorset, not as 'the best poet, but the most honest man,' and enriched by a pension of 300*l.* a year, was more revolting, of course, than ever in his prosperity; but his attacks on Dryden, peculiarly disgusting under the circumstances, have died with him, although greatly admired by the court party of the day.

A strange scene was witnessed when Queen Mary, attending the theatre for the first time after her elevation to the throne, 'The Spanish Friar' was selected as the performance of the evening; Dryden must have heard his newly proclaimed religion, with some confusion, satirized by his own brilliant touches in the character of Father Dominic. But he was not the only person who felt the position of affairs. Certain passages in the play, relating to the deposing of the late king and the accession of Queen Mary, had not been omitted in the representation. All eyes were turned to her, who had so lately coolly entered Whitehall, had run about peering into closets and looking at beds,—tearless. Queen Mary was, it is said, covered with confusion. Never again was that lofty brow, that face so full of mind, exposed on similar occasions to public view. Henceforth she and her ladies went to the play in masks, assigning, as a reason, the indelicacy of the pieces, and the impossibility of seeing them without a blush—a reason very characteristic of the half-morality of the day; since it is but a truism to say that what women cannot listen to without a blush, they should not hear at all.

In 1692, Dryden's career as a dramatic writer ended with

'Love Triumphant,' and, like Ben Jonson, he had the distress of having his last play condemned.

Henceforth Dryden may be looked upon as having retired from public life; though, perhaps, not into what we should now call domestic life. He was to the last the leading authority at Wills's; 'a pinch out of Dryden's snuff-box was like taking a degree at that academy of wit.'* Southerne, whose 'Fatal Marriage' long held the stage, was the amiable and cultivated associate whom Dryden most loved; until Congreve, placing into the hands of the old dramatist his 'Old Bachelor' for revision, formed an acquaintance, which the brilliant dramatist has worthily commemorated in his well-known character of Dryden, before quoted. Congreve, a gay young Templar, full of wit and hope, was much more partial to Wills's Coffee-house and to Dryden's flow of soul, than to the yellow parchments or dusty tomes of the Middle Temple. He had arrived in England, professedly to study the law, just after the Revolution, leaving his father, who was agent for the Earl of Burlington, though originally of a good Staffordshire family, in Ireland. Congreve, as a boy, *committed* a novel, 'Cleophilo:' it was full of wit and fancy; but it requires an older head than is commonly found on young shoulders to write a good novel. Experience, thought, suffering, mixing with various classes, are as requisite as fancy, or even as feeling. Three years elapsed, and, in recovering from an illness, Congreve wrote the 'Old Bachelor.' He procured an introduction to Southerne, and also to Arthur Mainwaring, long the protector of the famous Mrs. Oldfield. Thus he became known to Dryden. The 'Old Bachelor' was placed in the hands of 'glorious John.' The brilliant comedy fell into the hands of an old disappointed man; but of that genial nature that delights in the dawning fame of another. Besides, whatever Congreve's subsequent defects may have been, when spoiled by the world, he had then the

* Scott.

charming *tact* of humility; humility, with a consciousness of genius, is all-powerful to please. What nervous misery he must have experienced whilst his first production was under the unerring judgment of Dryden! With what a flushed face must he have heard the result! 'I have never,' said Dryden, 'seen such a first play; but,' he added, 'it must be adapted for the stage.' The 'stuff' was good, indeed, only the fashionable cut was wanting,—which was soon, says the author of Congreve's life in the Biographia Britannica, given it.

The energies of the 'old man,' as people over fifty were in that age styled, were in their perfection. In 1697, after only three years' labour, Dryden's translation of 'Virgil' appeared. 'It is,' said Pope, 'the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language.' What a narrative of quarrels with Tonson; of task-work, as Dryden thought, ill-requited; of feuds, and of those 'long accounts' which are sure to shorten friendship, does the history of those three years present. Tonson at first was kind and auspicious, and sent the poet presents of fruit and wine—requisite, one would think, to make up for the feuds which were even then fermenting. Tonson refusing to pay for Dryden's notes in 'Virgil,' which were to take six months' labour, 'Very well,' says Dryden, 'then they shall be short, for the saving of paper.' Tonson, secretary to the Kit Kat Club, and a Whig, wanted to make Dryden dedicate the translation to King William. There was an engraving of Eneas in the book; and Tonson took care that the engraver should heighten and enlarge the nose, till it looked like that aquiline beak which we see in the portraits of William the Third. The following epigram was quickly handed about:—

'Old Jacob, by deep judgment sway'd
To please the wise beholders,
Has placed old Nassau's hook-nosed head
On poor Eneas' shoulders.

To make the parallel hold tack,
Methinks there's little lacking,
One took his father pick-a-pack,
And t'other sent his packing.'

Tonson was suspected also by Dryden of intercepting certain letters to his sons, who were then at Rome.

Dryden's general poems were numerous; it would be out of place to recall them here, where an attempt is made to describe those only connected with the state of society at the period. His ode on the death of Mrs. Anne Killigrew produced a burst of enthusiasm even from Johnson. He pronounced it undoubtedly the 'noblest ode that our language has ever produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm: all the stanzas are not indeed equal. All imperial crowns cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.' If the 'dull cold ear of death' could be sensible to any human praise, Dryden's might have been soothed by this eulogium.

His last production, or almost his last, was his second Ode on St. Cecilia's Day. 'It may,' says Johnson, 'be said to stand without a rival.' It was written without expectation of payment, gratuitously,—a rare circumstance in those times, when a gift of 50*l.* or 100*l.* left under the plate at dinner was not thought to degrade a poet. Dryden was secretary to a musical society, and was asked by the stewards of the festival to write it for St. Cecilia's day. That he composed it at one sitting, is asserted by Bolingbroke: that it took him a fortnight was Dryden's own statement. Both may be true; for the ode may have required correction, and so a fortnight have been employed on its completion.

It is also stated by Derrick that Dryden received 40*l.* from the stewards for this ode:—probably, excited by the perfection of the poem, they were impelled into a fit of generosity.

It was set to music first by Clarke, whose composition was

not thought worthy of publication. Then Steele induced Clayton to try his hand; but with no better success. Lastly Handel, in 1736, did it ample justice.

The reception of this ode gratified the failing, infirm poet. 'I am glad,' he wrote to Tonson, 'my ode is esteemed the best of all my poetry, by all the town. I thought so myself when I writ it, but I mistrusted my own judgment.'

A young Templar, named Marlay, hastened to pay his respects to Dryden, at Wills's on the production of this ode. He congratulated Dryden on having written the finest and noblest ode ever produced in any language.

'You are right, young gentleman,' replied Dryden; 'a nobler ode never *was* produced, and never will.' The expression seems to have burst forth involuntarily, from a man generally modest about his own works.

Of his latter years, what has to be said is painful. 'I am afraid,' says Johnson, cautious of giving way, even in this instance, to compassion—(no man had really a tenderer heart) —'that the greater part of his life was passed in exigencies.' Little is known of the details of his daily life. Perhaps its happiest hours were spent in Wills's Coffee-house. There, in his arm-chair, placed near the fire in winter—and no one dared to interfere with that arrangement—or in the balcony in summer, he sat, judge of all literary works, and arbiter in disputes; gracious, hopeful, venerable. He used to call these two places his winter and his summer residence. He had sorrows enough in his small family, and in his trio of sons, to have overwhelmed many minds. Superstition, astrology, in which more especially he believed, added a gloom to the evil accidents which crushed those whom he best loved. For them he continued the labour of the brain; that organ, when overtasked, produces sensations of misery, which few who have not had to write for money, *can* comprehend. Charles, his eldest son, who shared sometimes his efforts, was ill at Rome. 'If I must die of over-study,' Dryden wrote to Tonson (whose heart

ought to have been wrung by such words), 'I cannot spend my life better than by preserving *his*.'

'It is to hours of seclusion, neglect, and even penury,' writes Sir Walter Scott, 'that we owe the "Paradise Lost," the "Virgil," and the "Fables."' It was to such hours that Dryden's release now came.

At length, the life so full of brilliant success and of cankering necessities, came to a close. Gout, erisypelas, a corpulent habit, an anxious mind, were enough to overwhelm a frame utterly shattered. Symptoms of gangrene appeared in one of his feet. Hobbes, the surgeon who attended Dryden, proposed amputation in order to prolong existence. But Dryden refused; he answered that 'he was an old man, and had not long to live by course of nature, and therefore did not care to part with one limb at such an age, to preserve an uncomfortable life on the rest.' He was sensible to the last; taking leave of his friends, as one of them relates, in 'so tender and obliging a farewell, as none but he himself could have expressed.' He died in the Roman Catholic faith.

The well-known story of Dryden's burial, so often repeated, was the fabrication, according to Malone, of Mrs. Thomas, the Corinne of Pope, who, thirty years after Dryden's death, gave currency to a tale, that Lord Jeffries, meeting with the funeral of Dryden, performed in a poor style, offered to give so great a man a suitable burial; and that, flinging himself on his knees before the Lady Elizabeth Dryden, into whose chamber he rushed, he obtained his request—and afterwards neglected to provide means for the ceremony.

It appears, however, that a contribution was made by Lord Jeffries, in conjunction with others, and that the real and suitable interment of the poet was provided by those means. He was, at all events, carried to Westminster Abbey, and buried close to the tomb of our great poet Chaucer.

Farquhar, the dramatist, wrote a letter describing the

funeral which eventually took place, (after some delay, there is no doubt,) with an attempt to make a solemn scene ludicrous.

'I now come,' he writes, 'from Mr. Dryden's funeral, where we had an ode in Horace sung, instead of David's Psalms, whence you may find that we don't think a poet worth Christian burial. The pomp of the ceremony was a kind of rhapsody, and fitter, I think, for Hudibras than him; because the cavalcade was mostly burlesque: but he was an extraordinary man, and buried after an extraordinary fashion; for I do believe there never was such another burial seen. The oration, indeed, was great and ingenious, worthy the subject, and like the author, whose prescriptions can restore the living, and his pen embalm the dead. And so much for Mr. Dryden, whose burial was the same as his life—variety and not of a piece!—the quality and mob; farce and heroics; the sublime and ridiculous mixed in a piece; great Cleopatra in a hackney coach.'*

In one of Dryden's last letters he predicts that his son Charles would, according to his nativity, ('which, casting it himself, I am sure is true,') recover his health. That son was then usher of the palace to Pope Clement the Twelfth; he returned to England, and was drowned, in swimming across the Thames near Windsor, in 1704. So much for the stars.

In his verses to Congreve, on his comedy called 'The Double Dealer,' Dryden had written these lines:

> 'Be kind to my remains; and O defend,
> Against your judgment, your departed friend.
> Let not th' insulting foe my name pursue,
> But shade those laurels which descend to you.'

The injunction was prompted by the far-seeing mind that belongs to great powers. No sooner was he dead than

* Scott's Dryden, note, 439.

satirical verses on the ceremonial of his funeral were circulated. The specimen offered by Mr. Malone begins thus:—

> 'Before the hearse the mourning coaches go,
> And screech a dismal sound of grief and woe,
> More dismal notes from bogtrotters may fall,
> More dismal plaints at Irish funeral;
> But no such flood of tears e'er stopped on tide
> Since Charles, the martyr and the monarch, died.'

Bishop Burnet attacked Dryden, calling him 'the greatest master of dramatic poesy, a monster of immodesty and of impurity of all sorts.'

Granville, Lord Lansdowne, defended his lost friend from this charge, hinting that Dryden's works were likely to last as long as the Bishop's sermons. The gross expressions of Burnet were afterwards stated by his youngest son, Thomas, to apply to Dryden's dramatic works only, but not to his private character as a member of society.

Dryden's letters evince his character in the best light. Actions, more expressive than words, attested his love for his children, his forbearance to his wife, his generous, lofty conduct to the calumnious, his hard work, his self-denial to himself, his liberality to others.

In the time of Malone his little patrimonial estate was tenanted by a farmer named Harriot, grandson of the man who held it in Dryden's lifetime. Harriot related to Malone that his grandfather took great pleasure in talking of the poet. 'He was,' said the old man, 'the easiest and kindest landlord in the world; and never raised the rent during the whole time that he possessed the estate.' This was great praise to a man who wrote for bread; who had sons depending on him; and Tonson waiting for the last line of the last verse; who lost his laureateship; and died too poor for his relations to pay for a suitable funeral. We wish in one other respect a character so engaging could be wholly justified; but not even the licence of the times can do more

than palliate the gross indelicacy of Dryden's comedy. Great minds should lead, not follow the times; by great minds are deeper responsibilities incurred than any worldly considerations can set aside.

With the exception of his 'Virgil,' his general pieces are those only that are now read. Strong sense, penetration into character, a vigorous imagination, sometimes grand thoughts, and beautiful touches of pathos and description cause the modern lover of poetry to confess that Dryden is, as yet, unparalleled by any succeeding poet.

CHAPTER III.

RESORTS OF THE WITS. — KNOWLE HOUSE. — LORD BUCKHURST, AFTERWARDS EARL OF DORSET. — HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER. — KNOWLE HOUSE AND ITS COTERIE. — EDMUND WALLER. — HIS CAREER. — ANECDOTES OF CROMWELL. — WALLER'S MINOR POEMS. — HIS LOVE FOR LADY DOROTHY SYDNEY. — LINES ON HIS DISAPPOINTMENT. — ANECDOTE OF LADY SUTHERLAND AND WALLER. — AN ACCOUNT OF WALLER'S PLOT. — AFTER HIS TRIAL WALLER GOES TO PARIS. — THE REIGNING BELLE AT THE COURT OF FRANCE. — RETURNS TO ENGLAND. — THE POET'S PANEGYRIC ON CROMWELL. — SIR PHILIP WARWICK'S DESCRIPTION OF CROMWELL'S COURT. — DEATH OF THE PROTECTOR. — WALLER'S VERSES 'ON HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY RETURN.' — CHARLES'S REMARK THEREON. — HIS INTERVIEW WITH KING JAMES. — WALLER'S DEATH. — EXTRACTS FROM HIS POEMS.

CHAPTER III.

FOREIGNERS have remarked that nothing so greatly astonishes them as our country seats; so numerous, so well appointed, so stately in exterior, so perfect in every detail within, so social, so hospitable. In the period succeeding the Protectorate, a Frenchman of rank, armed with all the letters of introduction imaginable, would, however, have found great difficulty in spending a winter in various country houses in England or Wales. Rebellion had levelled some of the finest of our gentlemen's seats, and shattered others. Basing House was a heap of ruins; of Burleigh-on-the-Hill nothing but the stables were standing; Ragland, as its gallant owner, long dead, had done, stood proudly still, defying the enemy, but was no longer habitable. Kenilworth was a still greater wreck: no more festivities there; no more Lanehams to tell of pageants and banquets. Many minor dwellings had so far stood the shock that the roof still sheltered the homestead; the walls were still erect; but the owners were impoverished, and could no longer play the part of the 'good old English gentleman.' One magnificent pile was, however, maintained by wealth and prudence. Knowle Park was still there, in yonder rich and favoured county, diversified and picturesque; not hilly enough for its acclivities to interfere with society; yet undulating, so that the eye never tires, as the feet ramble on its commons and park.

Knowle, or Knole, had changed hands, nevertheless, many times. Let us begin with the Grandisons, although Knowle had various owners before their day. By a Grandison it was sold to a Norman knight named Say; he next parted with it to Rauf Legh, who sold it to the Fiennes, Lords Say and Seale; then Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, bought it for 400 marks, and, for a long time, Knowle was the seat of the primates of England. It is pleasant to think that the erring but excellent Cranmer had it for a time. Alas! at his death it fell into the hands of Henry the Eighth. A sort of fate now hung over the fine old place. The Crown gave it to the Protector Somerset—he was decapitated; next it was bestowed on Dudley, Earl of Warwick, the father of Lady Jane Grey—he also was beheaded. Mary, with a view perhaps to its coming some time to a mitred possessor, gave it to her kinsman, Cardinal Pole. He died on the same day as that on which her Majesty also went—*where*, we know not. Then Dudley, Earl of Leicester, had Knowle and its lands as a present from the Crown. He surrendered the property, however, to Queen Elizabeth, and she bestowed it on Thomas Sackville, first Lord Buckhurst, and the author of the 'Mirrour of Magistrates,' and of 'Gorboduc.'

This favoured nobleman found Knowle House a specimen of the architecture of different ages. Much of it revealed the liberal hand and wealth of the hierarchy, and was the work of two archbishops, Bourchier and Merton; the most modern part is of the age of James the First, and was the erection of the first Earl of Dorset: the date, 1605, is on the waterspout. Then, we regret to say, appear the arms of Cranfield, the corrupt Lord Middlesex, impaled with those of Richard, the fifth Earl of Dorset, who married that nobleman's daughter. The garden gates, the sun-dials, and other places display these arms.

A spacious quadrangle, with smaller ones behind, compose the house, rendered classic by the assemblage therein of

Dryden, Waller, Sedley, and all that *coterie* of wits and poets who glorified that age. A low but castellated edifice, with numerous square towers, and two large embattled gateways, stands on gently rising ground; and, emerging from one of the most delicious of sylvan scenes, the winding walk from Sevenoaks through the park pleases rather than surprises the eye. The real grandeur of Knowle is not visible till you have entered the hall, gone through those ancient, stately suite of chambers; walked forth into the walled, old-fashioned garden; skirted the premises, and seen the whole extent of the feudal pile, standing on an area of five acres. Its great charm—we must needs pass over the park with its noble trees, its vistas, its beautiful undulations, and last, not least, its herd of deer—its great source of interest is its being almost wholly unchanged since Sackville, the author of 'Gorboduc,' Lord Treasurer—Sackville, his heir, Lord Chamberlain of the Household to Charles the First—a man, Clarendon tells us, 'so beautiful' in his person, 'so agreeable and vigorous,' 'of wit so sparkling and sublime, and learning of that lustre, that he could not miscarry in the world,' lived at Knowle, when, with the exception of the number of retainers, of the change in manners, and of costume, in its inmates, it was much in the same state as now. Still greater is the pleasure with which we view Knowle when we connect it with the days after the Restoration. War had ceased; troubles in which the last Earl, the handsome, witty Richard, had borne a part and suffered, were buried not only in the grave of Charles the First, but in that of Cromwell. A gay youth from France, Charles Sackville, afterwards Earl of Dorset and Middlesex, but then merely Lord Buckhurst, came over when Charles the Second came, and his laugh and his jest (not over proper) must have made those stately woods resound—must have set the old hall in commotion; and his gay impertinences have penetrated even to 'my lady's chamber.'

—For he was a thorough Cavalier at heart, that same Charles,

Earl of Dorset and Middlesex—Buckhurst let us rather call him, for 'Buckhurst' he then was, and as Buckhurst he was known and beloved. Is it not in Mrs. Inchbald's beautiful tale of the 'Simple Story' that the heroine says, speaking of one whom she loved—then Lord Elmshurt, previously Doriforth: 'No, let me call him Doriforth—for by that name I loved him;'—and so Buckhurst's friends doubtless, felt that new titles severed them from the companion of their youth,—from their accomplice in mad pranks—from the light-hearted Buckhurst—for 'Buckhurst' he seems to have been almost to his latest days: he appears to have risen above those distinctions of rank which only really ennoble those who actually win them.

'Nobility of blood
Is but a glittering and fallacious good.
The nobleman is he whose noble mind
Is filled with inward worth, unborrowed from his kind;
Virtue alone is true nobility.
Let your own acts immortalize your name,
'Tis poor relying on another's fame;
For take the pillars once away, and all
The superstructure must in ruins fall;
As a vine droops, when by divorce remov'd
From the embraces of the elm she lov'd.'

It may easily be conceived what a favourite young Buckhurst—not held back on his own part from any rigid code of morals from the courtier's life—became with Charles the Second, and even with the more guarded but equally dissolute James. Buckhurst was in constant request. He declined, however, all public offices, and contented himself with showing his gallantry in the Dutch war. He engaged in it as a sailor, under the Duke of York; and the night before an engagement wrote the song beginning—

'To all you ladies now on land
We men at sea indite,' &c.

This was considered one of the happiest efforts of his

muse. He was a minor poet only; he is not even to be named in the same sentence with his ancestor Thomas, first Earl of Dorset. Buckhurst was a judge of merit in others, but never an author of any high reputation. That reputation he owed chiefly to his position in society; to his popularity, to the variety of his acquirements, and to his judgment. 'The brightness of his parts, the solidity of his judgment, and the candour and generosity of his character,' Prior tells us, 'distinguished him in an age of great politeness, and at a court abounding with men of the finest sense and learning.' The most eminent masters in their several ways appealed to his determination. Waller thought it an honour to consult him on the softness and harmony of his verse; and Dr. Sprat, on the delicacy and tone of his prose. Dryden determines by him, under the character of Eugenius, as to the law of dramatic poetry. Butler owed it to him that the court 'tasted his Hudibras;' Wycherley that the town liked his 'Plain Dealer;' and the late Duke of Buckingham deferred to publish his 'Rehearsal' till he was sure, as he expressed it, 'that my Lord Dorset would not rehearse on him again.' 'Nor is this nicety of his judgment confined only to books and literature; he was the same in statuary, painting, and other parts of art. Bernini would have taken his opinion upon the beauty and attitude of a figure, and King Charles did not agree with Lely that my Lady Cleveland's picture was finished, till it had the approbation of my Lord Buckhurst.' Pope, famous, as Dean Swift remarks, for saying the most in the fewest words of any man of his age, thus apostrophises this accomplished nobleman:—

> 'Dorset! the grace of courts, the Muse's pride,
> Patron of arts, and judge of nature, dyed.
> The scourge of pride, though sanctifyed or great,
> Of fops in learning, and of knaves in state.
> Yet soft his nature, though severe his lay,
> His anger moral, and his wisdom gay.
> Blest Satyrist! who touched the mean so true,
> As showed, vice had his hate and pity too.

Blest Courtier! who could King and country please,
Yet sacred keep his friendship, and his ease.
Blest Peer! his great forefather's every grace
Reflecting, and reflected in his race.'

Even Horace Walpole, the great progenitor of the art of sneering, allows that Thomas, Earl of Dorset (Lord Treasurer), 'was the patriarch of a race of genius and wit.' Happily for the rising generation of peers after the Restoration, some kind of literature was almost necessary to *la haute volée.*

'The soldiers ap'd the gallantries of France,
And every flow'ry courtier wrote romance.' *

Lord Buckhurst, however, was very nearly losing a great portion of the influence which he afterwards exercised in society by great licentiousness in his early career. We will not call it depravity, for depravity applies to men never reclaimed. We pass over details which even the newspapers of our own day would hesitate to record. He was, however, we must, in truth, relate, taken up, with other persons of distinction, before Sir Robert Hyde in Westminster Hall, and fined for a riot in Bow Street. Pepys relates that Lord Buckhurst behaved with great indecorum in court. Yet the scandalous affair did not lessen the young reprobate's favour at the court of Charles the Second.

'I do not know how it is,' Lord Rochester said afterwards to the king, 'but my Lord Dorset may do anything, but is never to blame.' Unfortunately, Lord Buckhurst was not happy in his domestic relations, being twice left a widower. His first wife was a widow—Elizabeth, Countess of Falmouth—a daughter of Hervey Bagot, of Pipe Hall, Warwickshire; his second was the Lady Mary Compton, daughter of the Earl of Northampton. She was beautiful and accomplished;

* Pope.

but died in 1691, after an union of five years, in child-birth.

On account of his relationship to the Compton family, as well as for his openly-avowed disgust at the arbitrary measures of James the Second, Lord Buckhurst was chosen to escort the Princess Anne from Whitehall into the Midland counties; the Bishop of London, Dr. Compton, riding with a drawn sword in his hand in front of the carriage, and Anne, and her fair Mistress of the Robes, Sarah of Marlborough, in extasies of fear one moment, and of laughter another, inside the heavy vehicle.

A prosperous, and, for those days, a long life, was closed at Bath, whither the Earl of Dorset, for we must, at last, omit the familiar 'Buckhurst,' ended his days, in 1705-6; he was then sixty-seven. During his existence, and when in health, pure enjoyment centered in Dorset House and Knowle; they were to the world what Holland House and Chatsworth have been in our times. Rank, and, indeed, birth, were not taken into account when Buckhurst perceived that genius had given 'true nobility' to any individual, however lowly and poor. One envies him the remembrance of that good deed done when he introduced the author of 'Hudibras,' and his poem, to the court; he could not, it is true, make Charles grateful, nor save from poverty the quiet, patient Butler; but he did his best. He could not prevent James the Second from depriving Dryden of the laureateship; but it was, perhaps, one of the causes of the stern displeasure which Lord Dorset felt at James's whole career, that Dryden was so treated. 'Glorious John,' whom Dorset, as Buckhurst, had seen and sought at Wills's Coffee-house at the end of Bow Street, not, indeed, in those vulgar days when its sign was a cow, but after it was changed to a *rose*, was never forgotten. There Buckhurst had listened to Dryden's decisions in all matters of dubious criticism; there, probably, he learned much of that nice discrimination of beauty, and that perception of deficiencies which the conversation of the intellectual—a per-

petual criticism as it is on everything—so sharpens and perfects.

At Knowle—and how delightful, along that surface ever varying—along those slopes, renowned for soft beauties, stretching far to the south-west, forming a curve; trees rising on either side; beeches, such as are nowhere else seen, feathered to the bottom—how delightful there to stroll with Buckhurst, and with those whom he best loved to assemble at Knowle House—at Knowle he was happiest. There are moments, when traversing that undulation (scarcely to be called a valley), and coming on that spot where the old house stands in view, with its towers and battlements; its background a hill, clothed in wood; not near, indeed, to the house, but yet throwing out every point and angle; when one peoples that half glen, half vale, one knows not what to call it—with Buckhurst's form that seems appropriate there: his cavalier dress, before King Charles the Second insisted on vests, and put down 'bravery' of attire; his love-locks; his boots, folded over at the top, half up the leg; his face, worn, somewhat, with pain, somewhat with early dissipation, yet beaming kindly on his companions. Thus does he appear to our fancy.

And his companions, who are they? who those who most frequent that paradise of English scenery? who are most caressed by the polished lord as he welcomes them into that hall, where, in his father's time, two hundred people or more were daily entertained? Who the most often follow 'Buckhurst,' as he surveys, with critical eye, the last new painting which he has added to a collection made by his ancestor, and added to by him? Who is the most pressed to stay, the most honoured, the best lodged in those still unchanged chambers, with their ghostly-looking beds, their famed pictures, their rich and rare Venetian looking-glasses and toilet glasses in their silver frames, on their dark and panneled walls?

Many and various must have been the guests in that old

English home. There are heard sounds of what was then rare in England,—French conversation. Buckhurst spoke French perfectly. Sent on several missions into France, chiefly on account of his incomparable politeness, for even then the English could not usually come up to the mark in the court of the Tuileries, we hear Lord Buckhurst talking with La Fontaine or St. Evremond; and he can talk of the last new play of Corneille that has charmed the populace, or of the last *brochure* that has offended the court, with the ease and perfection of a Parisian—a rare talent. The simplicity of La Fontaine—whose patroness, the Duchess of Orleans, brought Louise de la Querouaille to England in 1669—the sagacity of St. Evremond,—were, perhaps, a dead letter to most of the assembled party, with the exception of Lord Buckhurst; but to him it must have been a luxury to hear the wit of both expressed in their own incomparable, and, as far as wit is concerned, almost untranslateable language.

One poet is there, advanced in years, with whom Lord Buckhurst may talk over almost every event that has affected *their* world, the great and the literary world (for they were then almost conjoined), for the last three reigns and the Protectorate. This is Edmund Waller.

Is it those few lines in 'Hudibras' which are supposed to apply to Waller, and to confirm the popular belief in his total want of sincerity, that prejudice one against the name of this veteran politician, courtier, and poet?

> 'This has been done by some, who those
> Th' adored in rhyme, would kick in prose,
> And in those ribbons would have hung,
> Of which melodiously they sung;
> That have the hard fate to write best,
> Of those still that deserve it least;
> So the best things be said o' th' worst.
> It goes for nothing when 'tis said,
> Only th' arrow's drawn to th' head.'*

* Hudibras. Bohn's Edition, Vol. i. p. 159.

Yet Waller had a certain claim on the confidence of Englishmen, being, through his mother's side, the nephew of John Hampden, the patriot, or, as Dr. Johnson calls him, 'the zealot of rebellion.' Rarely has a long life presented more lively scenes than that of one who has been called (we do not subscribe to the opinion) 'the most celebrated lyric poet that England has ever produced.'

At his onset in life, Waller had almost every advantage of nature and fortune; Hertfordshire claims him as one of her most distinguished natives. He was born at Coleshill, in that county, in 1605. He inherited from his father, who died when he was still a child, an estate of 3,500*l.* a year; and, through the care of his mother, he received such an education as would qualify him to take his place among the gentlemen of good position in his own county. His father was a man of good abilities; from his mother's side he perhaps derived that gift of eloquence which rendered him the 'darling of the House of Commons.'

He took his place in that assembly, some say in his sixteenth, others in his seventeenth—Dr. Johnson believes, in the eighteenth year of his age, and commenced poet and politician at once. Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham had been nearly lost on the coast of Spain, in returning from the 'Spanish wooing,' and Waller, in his eighteenth year, wrote a poem 'On the Prince's Escape at St. Andero.' In this early publication, it has been said, he attained 'a style that will never be obsolete,' and his versification was as easy in his first poem as in his last. This success was accomplished, first by a 'felicity like instinct,' and, secondly, by a careful perusal of Fairfax's translation of Tasso, a work to which Dryden confessed himself indebted for the smoothness of his numbers.

A mournful catastrophe next employed his muse. Charles the First was at Southwick, near Portsmouth, when the Duke of Buckingham was stabbed to the heart by Felton.

The king was attending public worship, when Sir John Hippisley entered the church, and with a troubled countenance, went directly to Charles, and whispered what had happened. The king remained unmoved—he was in the presence of 'the King of kings, and Lord of lords—of Him who ordereth all things both in heaven and on earth.' He was dumb, and opened not his mouth. When the service was ended, he went to his chamber, and, throwing himself on the bed, gave way to a passion of grief, for one whom he had loved, not alone as a servant and a subject, but as a friend.

Waller, up to every occasion, immediately wrote the lines 'On his Majesty receiving the News of the Duke of Buckingham's Death.'

A prudent, aspiring man of the world, young Edmund next carried the day in his suit to a young heiress, against a courtier named Crofts—and married. His wife was the daughter of Edward Banks, but he was left a widower at twenty-five. He retired to Beaconsfield, and built a house at Hallburn near that town, in which his mother resided, and here, aware, perhaps, of a too early entrance into the business of life, he passed some years of study; took his kinsman, Mr. Morley, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, into his house as a tutor, and with him read classics, and ancient history.

Here, too, the only gleam of romance that ever illumined the practical Waller's career shone athwart his path. He loved, or he wrote as if he loved, the fair Lady Dorothy Sydney, the daughter of the Earl of Leicester. We agree with Johnson that he courted this inexorable lady half fondly, half ambitiously; and his after career was consistent with that compound sentiment.

Sacharissa, Johnson gravely tells us, is a name derived from the Latin of sugar, and 'implies, if it means anything, a spiritless mildness, and dull good nature, such as excites

rather tenderness than esteem, and such as, though always treated with kindness, is never honoured or admired.'

But these characteristics do not seem to have applied to the Lady Dorothy; for she had the good taste to reject the worldly Waller. His verses were such as 'moved all hearts but hers he wished to move.'

> 'Yet what he sung in his immortal strain,
> Tho' unsuccessful, was not sung in vain;
> All but the nymph that should redress his wrong,
> Attend his passion, and approve his song!'

Lady Dorothy married, eventually, the Earl of Sunderland. Age and misfortune had changed her when Waller and she met again. Her brother, Algernon Sydney—one of the fourteen children of Robert, Earl of Leicester—was implicated in the Rye House Plot, and put to death in 1683. The act which condemned him was as ungrateful as it was unjust. Sacharissa's mother, the Countess of Leicester, had had the charge of the Duke of Gloucester and of the Princess Elizabeth for more than a year after the death of their father, Charles the First. James the Second, nevertheless, now turned against the family who had cherished those promising, ill-fated members of the royal House of Stuart.

Waller, to do him justice, seems to have sunk into despair at what was poetically termed Sacharissa's cruelty,—but what was, in fact, her dislike or indifference. He threatened to go to sea—disappointed lovers have always travelled when they could. Waller contemplated a voyage in company with the Earl of Warwick to the Summer Islands, where he had some property; for he generally combined romance and interest in a way unknown to most men. Let him, however, speak for himself, in lines said to have been written in the park at Penshurst.

> 'This last complaint th' indulgent ears did pierce
> Of just Apollo, president of verse;

Highly concerned that the Muse should bring
Damage to one whom he had taught to sing;
Thus he advised me: "On that aged tree
Hang up thy lute, and hie thee to the sea;
That there with wonders thy diverted mind
Some truce, at least, may with this passion find."
Ah, cruel nymph! from whom her humble swain
Flies for relief amid the raging main;
And from the winds and tempests does expect
A milder fate than from her cold neglect!
Yet there, he'll pray that the unkind may prove
Blest in her choice, and vows this endless love
Springs from no hope of what she can confer,
But from those gifts which heav'n has heap'd on her.'

The following lines were written previously, it is supposed, to Sacharissa's marriage:—

'Oh! how I long my careless limbs to lay
Under the plantain's shade, and all the day
With am'rous airs my fancy entertain;
Invoke the Muses, and improve my vein!
No passion then in my free breast shall move,
None but the sweet and best of passions, love.
There, while I sing, if gentle love be by,
That tunes my lute, and winds the strings so high;
With the sweet sound of Sacharissa's name,
I'll make the listening savages grow tame.'

In the bitterness of his disappointment Waller relieved himself not only by plaintive poetry, but by bitter prose, the more bitter that it was jocular. In a letter to her sister, the Lady Lucy Sydney, after referring to *her* loss in her sister as a companion, or, as he termed it, 'a bedfellow,' he thus proffers his good wishes:—

'May my Lady Dorothy, if we may yet call her so, suffer as much, and have the like passion for this young lord, whom she has preferred to the rest of mankind, as others have had for her. May she, that always affected silence and retiredness, have the house filled with the noise and number of her children, and hereafter, of her grandchildren; and then may

she arrive at the great curse so much declined by fair ladies, old age! May she live to be very old, and yet seem young; be told so by her glass, and have no aches to inform her of the truth; and when she shall appear to be mortal, may her lord not mourn for her, but go hand in hand with her to that place where we are told there is neither marrying, nor giving in marriage; that being there divorced, we may all have an equal share in her again! My revenge being immortal, I wish all this may also befall their posterity to the world's end and afterwards!

'To you, madam, I wish all good things.' He concludes in 'humbly' kissing her hands, 'and begging pardon for this trouble.' Such was the approved style of the times.

Quite in keeping with this outburst of spite or pleasantry (each way may it be taken) was Waller's interview with Lady Sunderland in her old age. They met in company at Lady Wharton's house at Woburn, near Beaconsfield. Such meetings are always perilous to that fabric of romance which memory retains entire in our hearts, and which reality dispels. 'When,' cried the Countess to Mr. Waller, 'will you write such fine verses upon me again?'

'Oh, madam!' was the quick, bitter reply, 'when your ladyship is young again.'

Waller was not the man to forgive a slight to his vanity; lives there the man who entirely and truly can?

He recovered from his first dream, and sank into a second. It is remarkable that all his dreams of love were about ladies of fortune and quality. Lady Sophia Murray was the subject, under the name of 'Amoret,' of this dream. This *nom de plume* was long a secret to the fashionable world until the Duke of Buckingham's line revealed it to Fenton the poet. Inspired by this new fancy—for to call it love were idle—he recovered.

> 'Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds
> Nor bends with the remover to remove.'

And Waller was not a man to wear the willow. He made no other use of it, says his biographer, than 'to hang his harp upon it,' and it did not, as we have seen, hang long. Any one might have foreseen that Waller, in his political career, would join 'Lord Dorset and the Neuters.' He went far into his uncle Hampden's designs and views, but stopped short—no man could do it better—at the turning point. He was sent as one of the commissioners to treat with Charles the First for peace. The king received them at Christ Church, in Oxford. Waller being a commoner, came the latest in the chosen delegates; he stooped down to kiss his Majesty's hand. 'Though you are the last, Mr. Waller, you are not the worst, nor the least in our favour,' said the king. This courteous reception is said to have affected Waller with remorse, and he plunged into the conspiracy generally called Waller's plot. We are not here called upon to follow him through all the tortuous mazes of his political conduct. His share in the confederacy to which his name was affixed, was discovered by a servant of Mr. Tomkins's, clerk of the Queen's Council, and the whole affair was disclosed to the Parliament. The man who overheard it was hidden, it is said, behind a hanging, and listened basely to his master's discourse with Waller. Waller, on the other hand, according to one of his relations, was betrayed by his sister, Mrs. Price, and a Mr. Good, a Presbyterian parson, who together had stolen some of his papers.

One night Waller dreamt that his sister had betrayed him. He arose; there was a fire lighted in the chimney of his chamber. He instantly burnt all the papers he could find, and thus saved his life.

Several of the conspirators suffered for their guilt. Some died in prison—some were executed. Waller was apprehended.

This man of the world was a coward. Fear seized him when he was apprehended. He trembled, he was confounded. He confessed all—*all;* not only his own share in the plot, but

what others had done and said, and had intended to do:—ladies who had admitted him for his wit and character into their intimacy were betrayed. His life was spared: the craven lived on, and lived, probably, to repent.

He was thrown into prison. His trial, Lord Clarendon tells us, was 'put off out of Christian compassion till he might recover his understanding.' The delay caused the fury of his prosecutors somewhat to cool; and 'by drawing visitants to himself of the most powerful ministers of all factions,' by his liberality, his apparent penitence, his receiving without a reply the vilest and most vulgar abuse from them, 'as clearer convictions than in his life he had ever had;' and distributing large sums amongst them for their prayers and ghostly counsel, Waller prepared himself and others for his trial, and for the mitigation of his sentence. Nothing could be conceived finer than his address, or more captivating than his oratory. He prevailed on the members not to try him by a council of war, and so saved his 'dear-bought life.' He was condemned, fined, released, and banished to France.

Amongst other statements which he made to the Council, he declared, on being asked whether Selden and Whitelock were in the plot, that they were not, and said that 'he did come one evening to Selden's study, where Pierpont and Whitelock then were with Selden, on purpose to impart it to them all; and speaking of such a thing in general terms, those gentlemen did so inveigh against any such thing as treachery and baseness,' that he durst not tell them.

Waller had now married again a lady named Bresse. With his wife, who accompanied him, he crossed the Channel. He remained some time in Paris, and there his favourite daughter Margaret—the eldest of his thirteen children—was born. She acted in his riper age, as in his decline, as her father's amanuensis.

Paris was then, as it is always, the most delightful of places to forget one's misery in,—the most enchanting resort

to heighten the fleeting pleasures of life; and to Paris Waller went. He set up house, and entertained all the *élite* hospitably upon the sale of his wife's jewels (wives being considered in all ages as eligible for all sacrifices,—an old heresy). Either from the fashion prevailing in the best French society —for sentiments are in and out of fashion in the Faubourg St. Germains—or from real preference, or from the native obstinacy of his nature, we know not, but certain it is that Waller was capable of playing fast and loose with all sides. He now attached himself to the wreck of that which was no longer a court, except in name.

Henrietta Maria, unchastened by adversity, was then living in the Louvre, a pensioner on bounty that was never regularly paid. When Cardinal de Retz, the factious enemy of Mazarin, went to visit this queen he found her in circumstances of the greatest privation. 'I went,' he says in his Memoirs, 'to visit the Queen of England, whom I found in her daughter's chamber, who has since been created Duchess of Orleans. At my coming in she said, "You see I have come to keep Henrietta company; the poor child could not rise to-day for want of a fire." The truth is, that Cardinal Mazarin, for six months together, had not paid her any money towards her pension, that no tradespeople would trust her for anything, and that there was not at her lodgings at the Louvre one single billet. I remember,' he proceeds, 'the condition I had found her in, and had strongly represented the shame of abandoning her in that manner, which caused the Parliament (of Paris) to send forty thousand livres to her Majesty. Posterity will hardly believe that a Princess of England, granddaughter to Henry the Great, had wanted a faggot in the month of January to get out of bed in the Louvre, and in the eyes of a French court.'

The reigning belle of the court of France, among the English, was Anne, Countess of Morton, a daughter of

Sir Edward Villiers, and a niece of George, first Duke of Buckingham of that family. To her Waller paid such compliments as were justly due to her sense and her fidelity. Appointed governess to the Princess Henrietta, afterwards Duchess of Orleans, Lady Morton, with courage and success, disguised, conveyed her royal pupil, also in disguise, to France in 1646, two years before the death of Charles the First. Unhappily for the royal fugitives, Mazarin, who was a worshipper of Cromwell—if indeed he felt reverence for anything—was at the head of all affairs, private and political. On this account were the royal exiles thus neglected.

Waller, however, addressed a poem to Lady Morton, regretting the depravity of the age:—

> 'Dark shades become the portrait of our time,
> Here weeps misfortune, and there triumphs crime.'

To which he added—deceiver as he was—a prophetic wish for the Restoration, and in conclusion, addressed to Henrietta of Orleans, that exquisitely beautiful, ill-fated being—matched as she was with a monster for her husband,—but then in all her wonderful, though childish loveliness these lines:—

> 'Born in the storms of war, this royal fair
> Produced like lightning in tempestuous air,
> Though now she flies her native isle (less kind,
> Less safe for her, than either sea or wind)
> Shall, when the blossom of her beauty's blown,
> See her great brother on the British throne;
> Where peace shall smile, and no dispute arise,
> But which rules most, his sceptre or her eyes.'

Another poem, also on a sufferer in the royal cause, was written by Waller when in France. Few catastrophes did greater discredit to the Cromwellian forces than the death of Colonel Charles Cavendish, a younger son of William, Earl of Devonshire, a youth just returned from his travels. He was one of the first to draw the sword for Charles. His

short career was signalized by his heroism. His death was marked by the evidences of that ferocity which the civil war is so truly said to have engendered. He was murdered at Gainsborough in cold blood, after quarter had been asked and given. 'My captain-lieutenant,' Cromwell wrote to the Association, 'slew him with a thrust under the short ribs.' Not a word of regret, not an expression of disapprobation follows. The Protector might have been writing about a calf or an ox that had been killed: he could not have said less.

On Cavendish—only twenty-three years of age at his death—Waller wrote an epitaph, in which these lines appear:—

> 'Cromwell, with odds of numbers and of fate,
> Removed this bulwark of the Church and State;
> Which the sad issue of the war declared,
> And made his task to ruin both less hard.'

This epitaph seems to bear marks of conversion to the royal cause; but wait a while. Waller the 'Neuter' is Waller still.

He was allowed to return home, chiefly on the intercession of his brother-in-law, Colonel Scroope. He gladly set off for England, for he was now, he said, reduced to what he called the 'Rump'-jewel, and his funds could hold out no longer. He crossed over to England, and retired to Hallburn, his own seat.

His good old mother was living in honour at Beaconsfield. Like most old-fashioned people, she loved the royalist cause, although related both to Hampden and to Cromwell. She thought, no doubt, that Charles's acts were arbitrary, but that one might as well be enslaved by a monarch as by an usurper.

Oliver, however, visited her, nevertheless, and she entertained him hospitably. On such occasions her spirit was up, and she used to tell him frankly how his 'pretensions' (what a daring word!) would end. Cromwell, jocular for once, could hardly prevent a smile from passing over that hideous, vulgar, sanctimonious, clever face of his as he sat at table.

He used, however, to throw a napkin over her, and to say he would not enter into disputes with his aunt (so, though she was only a distant cousin, he called her). Still the old lady went on—there is no silencing politics in old women. Eventually Mistress Waller was found out corresponding with the Royalists. Then Cromwell—forgetting all his good dinners, and merry contests, and the sanctity of old friendship, and of frequent acts of hospitality, made the old lady—we are ashamed to tell it—a prisoner in her own house, under the *surveillance* of her own highly Protestant and republican daughter, probably Mrs. Price.

The air of England brought back all Waller's patriotism, as he called it, and soon was his muse devoted to flattering the task of the Protector; for Cromwell had quickly taken him into his confidence and friendship, and Waller repaid him with one of the finest of his poems: 'To my Lord Protector of the present greatness and joint interest of his Highness and this nation.'

This famous panegyric displays great discretion: antecedents being generally awkward in a public career, and particularly so in that of Cromwell, the past is *gulfed;* the method of climbing to the summit of power is taken for granted; and all episodes previous to the *fait accompli* are suppressed. The Protector is introduced as the head of the State; England's defender, the author of her security at home, of her greatness abroad; just as if, in complimenting the present Emperor of the French, you veiled the *coup d'état,* under shadows of darkness, and presented at once the hero, radiant in power and glory, munificent, brave,—all but beloved.

The shameless piece of adulation addressed to Cromwell thus begins:

> 'While with a strong, and yet a gentle hand,
> You bridle faction, and our hearts command,
> Protect us from ourselves, and from the foe
> Make us unite and make us conquer, too;

Let partial spirits still aloud complain,
Think themselves injur'd that they cannot reign;
And own no liberty but where they may
Without control upon their fellows prey.
* * * * *
Your drooping country, torn with civil hate,
Restor'd by you, is made a glorious State:
The seat of empire, where the Irish come,
And the unwilling Scots, to fetch their doom.'

After much self-gratulation, the ode thus proceeds:

'Lords of the world's great waste, the ocean, we
Whole forests send to reign upon the sea;
And ev'ry coast may trouble or relieve;
But none can visit us without your leave.
Angels and we have this prerogative,
That none can at our happy seats arrive;
While we descend at pleasure to invade
The bad with vengeance, and the good to aid.
Our little world, the image of the great,
Like that, amidst the boundless ocean set;
Of her own growth hath all that nature craves,
And all that's rare, as tribute from the waves.'

The concluding lines refer to a project long, it is believed, cherished in Cromwell's heart—the Crown. Some stories have indeed prevailed regarding this wish, cherished in the Protector's heart of hearts. When a boy at the Free School, Huntingdon, Cromwell acted the part of Lingua, in what was styled a pleasant comedy, 'The Combat of the Tongue and the Five Senses for superiority:' in this a scene occurs which is thought to have suggested certain ideas to the boyish mind of the youth.

It is impossible to say what gives the impulse to action, or from what impressions in boyhood, and even in infancy, our fate is biassed, if not determined by our own predelictions. But we are inclined to dismiss this notion as far-fetched and improbable.

Whitelocke, however, declares that the Crown 'was greatly "ambitioned by Oliver;" but on sounding the minds of the

army, especially of Lambert and Fleetwood, he found them so much averse to it, that he concluded the safest way was to decline it; and sent, therefore, a message to the Parliament, declaring "that he could not accept the government under the title of King."'

Waller, nevertheless, played into this weakness; and in his poem 'Of a War with Spain, and Fight at Sea,' published in 1656, penned these lines. After referring to the laurels won by others, he says:

> 'Our great Protector hath such wreaths enough;
> His conquering head hath no more room for bays;
> Then let it be as the glad nation prays:
> Let the rich ore forthwith be melted down,
> And the State fixed by making him a crown;
> With ermine clad, and purple, let him hold
> A Royal sceptre, made of Spanish gold.'

This was plain speaking; much plainer than Waller would have adopted had he known that, at that very time, the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and that four years afterward that mighty stem would fall to earth, by a disease quite as much mental, as bodily.

One longs to know what Waller did really think of Cromwell, to whom he had continual access. Cardinal Mazarin called Cromwell a fortunate madman: Father Orleans prefers to that epithet the still more forcible expression, and styles him a judicious villain: Lord Clarendon describes him as, a brave, wicked man: Gregory de Lille, as a tyrant without vices. Even Waller appears to have thought him an hypocrite.

Waller found that this wonderful man was wonderfully versed in 'Greek and Roman story;' and that his rude cant and spiritual simplicity were nothing but affectation. Sometimes, as the polished Waller and the Protector were talking together, visitors were announced; a change came over Oliver. He used to stop his friends at the door: then

Cromwell was again on the stage of life; his sanctimonious air, his grave demeanour, were instantly resumed; and Waller, sitting within, used to hear him say, 'The Lord will reveal, the Lord will help.' Greatly edified, the guests departed; and Cromwell, returning to the room, used to apologize thus to the amused and penetrating Waller. 'Master Waller,' he was wont to say, 'I must talk to these men in their own way.' He then resumed the subject where he had stopped short.

It is always a curious sight to observe two men of the world, each thinking he deceives the other; each seeing through the other's motives and deceptions. Cromwell, all this while, understood Waller—of whom he made a party tool—better than the poet thought. For Cromwell 'knew men perfectly, worked them to his purposes, as if they had been cattle, and what is more wonderful, did that often while they conceived they were making a tool of him.'

Waller had even then seen much of courts; but Whitehall, in the days of the Commonwealth, was more notable than any. Familiar as Cromwell had been with his soldiers and officers, always calling them by their Christian names, and sometimes giving one of them a playful box on the ear, he assumed, in the ancient palace of British monarchs, great state. There was, Sir Philip Warwick tells us in his Memoirs, 'a strange kind of splendour in his time at Whitehall; for sometimes his court wore an air of stately serenity; at other times he could unbend himself and drink freely, though not to excess, that he might have an opportunity of sounding these men's thoughts, in their unguarded moments, and of ravishing opinions by unexpected questions; for all which he was admirably qualified by nature, having two qualities that seldom meet in the same person,—a memory retentive as marble, and a judgment that pierced like lightning. Sometimes, even in the midst of serious consultation, he started into buffoonery; sometimes, the feasts that were prepared for persons of the first distinction, were, by a signal

of drum and trumpets, made the prey of his guards. There was a kind of madness in his mirth, as well as of humour in his gravity, and much of design in all.'

All, however, came to an end. The Protector, with the frantic cries and reproaches of his favourite daughter, Mrs. Claypole, sounding in his ears, was seized with tertian ague. No complaint was more certain in those days, before the present remedies were known, to bring other maladies to the surface. Waller may, perhaps, at this very time, have been preparing his Ode on the Restoration. Yet the Protector struggled with his malady, till one day, after dinner, his five physicians coming to attend him, one of them said that his Highness's pulse intermitted. On this, Cromwell turned pale, and almost fainted. He was carried to bed; but revived to make his will, and to meet death, not hopefully, indeed, but with less of the actor in that last scene of the drama than might have been expected.

Waller, no doubt, was beginning to think how he could shift about; how meet Queen Henrietta and Lady Morton; what he should say to Charles the Second;—or whether another exile might be inflicted on him to punish the idea of the supposititious crown of Spanish gold. We pity his dilemma. Cromwell might, however, the faithful said, be saved by a miracle. It were almost treason to the State to think otherwise; and Dr. Bates, his physician, coming out of the sick Protector's chamber, nearly incurred dismissal. 'I am afraid,' he said, meeting another doctor, 'I am afraid our patient will become light-headed.' 'Then,' replied the other learned personage, 'you are certainly a stranger in this house. Don't you know what was done last night? The chaplains, and all who are dear to God, being dispersed into several parts of the palace, have prayed to God for his health, and all have brought this answer: "He shall recover."'* The presumption was

* See Dr. Bates's account of Cromwell's last illness, quoted in the Biographia Britannica, art. Cromwell, note.

soon chastised; and Cromwell's death must have caused, among other small and great effects of it, much embarrassment to Waller.

He discharged one duty—wrote verses on the death of Oliver; and then hastened to put on his court suit, and to present King Charles with a copy of his verses 'On His Majesty's Happy Return.'

On his visiting Whitehall, Charles the Second remarked to him, 'that he thought this poem (on his Happy Return) much inferior to the panegyric on Cromwell.' 'Sire,' replied Waller, 'we poets never succeed so well in writing truth, as in writing fiction.' He was regarded as one of the greatest wits of the court; yet his spirits were never aided by stimulants; and he was one of the few specimens of a water-drinker by choice in that age. As, therefore, the flow of soul yielded to the influence of the bowl, and the wit of the company in general sank, and sank, till it almost expired in inebriation, Waller's repartees rose. Saville used to say, that 'no man in England should keep him company without drinking, but Ned Waller.' It is very probable that another man in England, who would desire to do so, could scarcely be found. There was no fear of the bad habit of temperance becoming a prevalent inconvenience.

Somewhat pleasant, somewhat dignified, are Waller's later years. He had done with ambition; he retired to Hallburn, and took a resolution to pass his days with his first friends, the Muses. At seventy-five he wrote verses on the Earl of Roscommon's translation of Horace's 'Art of Poetry;'—a feat at which in these days we should not wonder; for we have great lights not yet burnt out, that have lasted years longer. At last he turned his muse, we are told, to heaven, and wrote his Divine Poems. That poem entitled 'Of the last verses in the Book' is exquisitely beautiful. Happily, through all his worldliness, his insincerity, and his ostentation, Waller still believed. He was long an unpractical Christian; but he now

turned, heart and soul, to that which, even to the most thoughtless, *must* come, at the last, as a solemn reality.

He wished to breathe his last at Coleshill, where he was born. 'I should be glad,' he said, 'to die, like the stag, where I was roused.' He ended his days, however, at Beaconsfield. His legs beginning to swell, he asked his physician 'what that meant?' 'Sir,' was the reply, 'your blood will run no longer.' He received this sentence of death composedly, his children were called around him, and they joined in the holy communion with their dying father.

He gathered up his strength, and expressed to them his firm belief in the Christian religion. Then, with somewhat of his former conversation, he told them how he remembered hearing the Duke of Buckingham talk profanely to King Charles the Second; and how, he falteringly added, he had then said: 'My lord, I am a great deal older than your grace, and I believe I have heard more arguments for atheism than ever your grace did; but I have lived long enough to know there is nothing in them, and so I hope your grace will.' Those who heard him, recalled, perhaps, the dying poet's last two lines in the 'Of the last verses in the Book':—

> 'Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view
> That stand upon the threshold of the new.'

And Pope, in his epitaph, has perfected the idea:—

> 'Calmly he looked on either life, and here
> Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear.'

Waller had lived long enough to present King James the Second with a copy of verses, called 'A Presage of the Ruin of the Turkish Empire' (a poem which the Comte de Paris would do well to re-edit). James, courteous like his race, took the aged man into his closet, and pointing to the picture of Mary, the king's daughter, asked how he liked it.

'My eyes are dim,' the feeble Waller replied, 'and I know not who it is.'

'It is,' replied the king, 'the Princess of Orange.'

'Then,' rejoined Waller, 'she is like the greatest woman in the world' (flatterer to the last).

'Whom do you call so?' inquired the king.

'Queen Elizabeth,' was the answer.

'I wonder, Master Waller, you should think so: but I must confess, she had a wise council.' 'And, sire,' Waller returned, 'did you ever know a fool choose a wise one?'

James, still valuing Waller's influence, on hearing that he was going to marry his daughter to the Rev. Dr. Birch, a divine of the Church, sent to dissuade him, saying, 'He wondered he could have any thoughts of marrying his daughter to a failing church.'

The answer ran thus: 'Sire, his Majesty does me great honour in taking any notice of my domestic affairs, but I have lived long enough to observe that this failing church has a trick of rising again.'

Consistent with his father's mode of viewing life as a race in which one ought always to make up to the fortunate winner, was the character of the son and heir of Waller—Edmund also; who, waiting to make or meddle till the Prince of Orange was actually landed, then presented himself to William. His father had predicted that James 'would be left like a whale on the strand,' but dying in 1687, Waller had not lived to see his presage fulfilled.

Waller, though the delight of the House of Commons by his manner, has left no traces of good effected; he was only, Burnet tells us, 'concerned to say that which should make him be applauded; he never laid the business of the House to heart, being a vain and empty, though a witty man.' He is believed, through all his tergiversation, to have been a sincere friend to monarchy. His minor poems appertain especially to 'the Literature of Society;' he was not, as Johnson says, 'so easily supplied with grand, as with soft images—for beauty is more easily found than magnanimity.'

Every one recalls, with pleasure, Waller's beautiful lines, 'Go, lovely Rose.'

'Go, lovely Rose!
Tell her that wastes her time and me
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

'Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That had'st thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

'Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

'Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!'

CHAPTER IV.

MATTHEW PRIOR. — HIS CAREER AND POEMS. — MOUSE MONTAGUE. — HIS PROPOSAL FOR THE NATIONAL DEBT.—PROJECTS THE BANK OF ENGLAND, AND A NEW EAST INDIA COMPANY.—HIS SUCCESS IN LIFE.—HIS ABJURATION OF POETRY.—MONTAGUE'S PASSION FOR MRS. BARTON, THE NIECE OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON. — BEQUEATHS FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS TO HER AT HIS DEATH.—ANTHONY HAMILTON.—HIS LIFE. — HIS 'MEMOIRS OF COUNT DE GRAMMONT.' —DECLINE OF LORD DORSET.—HIS RELATIVE ANNE, COUNTESS OF DORSET. —HIS DEATH.—THE CLIQUE AROUND HIM BROKEN UP.—BEGINNING OF THE AUGUSTAN AGE.

CHAPTER IV.

PRIOR'S 'Nut-Brown Maid' was the delight of our grandmothers; ladies, coeval with the young Pretender, were still proud to repeat it; it conveyed the true, proper, orthodox sentiment of woman to man; of undeviating fidelity, not to say subserviency to the half indifferent. It embodied the sentimental rule which the licentious moral condition of the court of Charles the Second had somewhat set aside; for that court was certainly '*le paradis des femmes*;' the bad among them especially. At a reasonable age each girl was supposed to have committed the 'Nut-Brown Maid' to memory. We have an impression that some part of it was set to music,—the last test of popularity.

Prior was, in fact, one of the most fashionable poets among those who frequented Knowle Park, and who experienced, not only the hospitality but the kindness of its owner. For to the bounty of the Earl of Dorset he owed most of the prosperity of a chequered life.

Matthew Prior, who afterwards figured so admirably as a diplomatist, was the son of a joiner in the City of London. His father dying early, he was left to the guardianship of an uncle, who, fortunately for the boy, was no private individual but who exercised the public function of a vintner at Charing

Cross. Endowed with sufficient judgment to appreciate the advantages of education, this excellent man placed his nephew at Westminster School, where he was so fortunate as to be under the tuition of Dr. Busby. Matthew soon rose to the upper forms of the school; but, as in Ben Jonson's case, his circumstances were adverse to learning, and he was recalled, at an early age, from Westminster to follow his uncle's business as a vintner. He still found leisure to pursue his classical studies—Horace in particular. Matthew's uncle was the '*mine* host' of all the wits of the day; we all know how different taverns and tavern life were then to our own politer age, in which we should indeed wonder, if we heard of our prime wits and politicians—the Earl of Stanhope, for instance, our excellent historian, or the Earl of Carlisle, or any other nobleman who cherishes letters—we should, indeed, wonder if we heard of their spending evening after evening by a tavern fireside, inviting the intimacy of young poets and dramatists; but it was otherwise then. Poets, wits, essayists, mixed even with bishops, as well as with peers, round the table of Will's and of other similar establishments. It happened, then, one day when Lord Dorset, an *habitué* of the tavern, was there amidst the circle of a coterie of men of rank, who were reputed scholars and wits, that the conversation turned upon Horace. A dispute on a particular passage arose between them, when one of the gentlemen said: 'I find we are not like to agree in our criticisms; but, if I mistake not, there is a young fellow in the house who is able to set us right.'

Matthew, or, as he was called, Matt, was instantly sent for; and he construed the passage referred to with so much exactness, and yet with so engaging a degree of modesty, that Lord Dorset resolved to remove him from the tavern, and to place him at St. John's College, Cambridge, that he might better pursue his studies.

Bishop Burnet—famous for putting things in a disagreeable

shape (some persons have the art of doing so, even when they intend to behave like angels)—notices Prior's elevation by calling him 'a boy in a tavern,' whom the Earl of Dorset generously assisted. The reproach of 'having been at the bar of a tavern,' was launched against poor 'Matt' in the true ungenerous spirit of the political world when parties were in a state of full effervescence.

Prior was, however, sent to St. John's College, and was admitted in 1682. In 1686, he became a Fellow of the College; and this fellowship, which kept him single, was both the starting-point of his career and the resource of his old age. He began and he ended life—so to call a young man's professional progress—as the Fellow of a College. But what a stormy passage in the interval between those two periods! Sunshine, indeed, at first—but tempests lowering for ever over the horizon.

His friendship with Montague was one of those lucky chances which turn up, as the saying is, in a man's destiny. One does not like to hold out college friendships as an inducement to the young to cherish intimacies favourable to their future prospects; for friendship, at that early age at any rate, ought to have no leaven of self-interest; yet it is remarkable how great is the number of men whose success has been enhanced by a judicious selection of college friends.

Charles Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, was probably acquainted with Prior previously to their both going to Cambridge; for he was, like Prior, under Busby at Westminster. Montague was nearly being chosen for a studentship in Christ Church, Oxford; but he so earnestly wished to go to Cambridge that his friends indulged him, and he was entered, in 1682, as a fellow commoner at Trinity College, in that University. Stepney, his schoolfellow at Westminster and his friend, entered at the same time; and it was the devoted affection of Montague for Stepney that induced him to select Cambridge as the scene of his college career. Stepney

was then nineteen; his compositions in after-life are said to 'have made grey authors blush.' His proficiency as a minor poet began early and closed soon; for his life, as Johnson tells us, 'was busy and not long'—and actual business soon drove away inferior poetry. But his success in versifying was the tie between him and Montague, who became in after-life his patron, as he had been, in their boyish days, his friend.

These three—Prior, Montague, Stepney—were all fresh-men together; Sir Isaac Newton was then mathematical tutor at the College; and it may readily be conceived how great was the stimulus given to mental activity by such an example; and how proud if that they could not emulate the wonderful grasp of mind of one who, as a fresh-man, had taken into his memory and comprehension all Euclid's Propositions at one reading, they still would be to obtain his approbation.

Montague, it seems, did more than merely gain Newton's applause: he had the honour of his friendship; he reverenced that truly illustrious man, but his preference and his gayest spirits were given to Stepney and to Prior.

The death of Charles the Second was too favourable an opportunity for a young poet not to try his skill upon it; and Montague forthwith published verses on that event—so good, it was thought, that Lord Dorset read them, and resolved to invite the young author to London, and to introduce him 'to all the talents.' Sir Charles Sedley, who was with Dorset when he came to this resolution, seconded the intention. Henceforth Montague's introduction to all that was great, and gay, and witty, and ambitious, was insured. His celebrity was soon shared by Prior, in conjunction with whom he wrote a satire on Dryden's poem, calling it 'The Hind and the Panther travestied in the Story of the Country Mouse and the City Mouse;' on which account Montague was called 'Mouse Montague,' and he became the rage of all those who adopted what was called true Protestant principles. All his poetry was now addressed, under different titles, to the one

ruling passion of Montague—the main chance; his dream—the object that he loved with a love 'passing the love of woman'—his tenth muse, who inspired all his subsequent efforts.

She must have had a hard task to inspire Montague's 'Lines on the Marriage of the Princess Anne and George, Prince of Denmark;' but, doubtless, they rose to the occasion. Montague, though the grandson of an earl, was one of fourteen children, and poor. He veered, therefore, dexterously about; his little barque would have been lost, had he not shifted his canvas, and sailed before the wind. He signed prudently, perhaps conscientiously, the invitation to William of Orange to come to England, and was soon presented by Lord Dorset to that prince.

'May it please your Majesty,' said the graceful Dorset, 'I have brought a *mouse* to have the honour of kissing your hand.' No one could resist Dorset: he could even draw wit from that military prince who, even Burnet allows, seldom spoke without 'a disgusting dryness.'

William for once smiled: the singular introduction was explained to him; the grim features more freely relaxed. We must imagine that we hear a deep asthmatic cough;—a sort of preface to the unwonted burst of wit:—'You will do well to put me in a way of making a man of him,' was the much applauded answer. It was followed, according to report, by an allowance of 500*l.* a year, to be paid to young Montague till he had some promotion. Those were pleasant times for the few, those days of King William the Third. Montague, it was thought, had done a singular service to the Protestant cause by his travestie. It was cudgelling the veteran laureate, 'Glorious John,' with his own weapon.

Prior is said to have had much the largest share in this over-praised composition. Lord Peterborough, on being asked whether the satire was not written by Montague in conjunction with Prior, answered, 'Yes; as if I, seated in Mr.

Cheselden's chaise drawn by his fine horse, should say, "*Lord*, how finely we draw this chaise!"'

Prior, it seems, was not satisfied with the too small portion of fame ascribed to his part of a composition which, having nothing original in it, was chiefly extolled on account of its political allusions. In 'Earl Robert's Mice' the following stanza occurs:—

> 'My friend, Charles Montague's preferred,
> Nor would I have it long observed
> That one mouse eats, while t'other's starv'd.'

Yet one would suppose he had every reason to be satisfied, since he was introduced at court, and soon afterwards appointed English Secretary of Legation at the Hague. This was a most honourable post; but Prior appears, from his letter to his friend Fleetwood Sheppard, to have experienced those difficulties in his path which are in this country smoothed down to the young man of good connections. Our present introduction of examinations may do much to obviate the disgraceful system of family patronage which still exists; in former days, even after William's accession, it was at its odious climax.

Prior's epistle to Sheppard tells his own story better than any one can tell it for him:—

> 'When crowding folks with strange ill faces
> Were making legs, and begging places,
> And some with patents, some with merit,
> Tir'd out my good Lord Dorset's spirit,
> Sneaking, I stood amongst the crew,
> Desiring much to speak with you;
> I waited while the clock struck thrice
> And footman brought out fifty lies,
> Till patience vexed and legs grown weary,
> I thought it was in vain to tarry;
> But did opine it might be better
> By penny-post to send a letter.
> Now if you miss of this epistle,
> I'm baulked again, and may go whistle.

My business, sir, you'll quickly guess,
Is to desire some little place;
And fair pretensions I have for 't,
Much need, and very small desert;
Whene'er I writ to you, I wanted,
I always begged, you always granted.
Now as you took me up when little,
Gave me my learning and my vittle,
Asked for me, from my Lord things fitting,
Kind, as I'd been of your begetting,
Confirm what formerly you've given,
Nor leave me now at six and sevens,
As Sunderland has done Mun Stephens.
No family that takes a whelp
When first he laps, and scarce can yelp,
Neglects or turns him out of gate
When he's grown up to dog's estate;
Nor parish if they once adopt
The spurious brats of strollers dropt,
Leave 'em when grown up lusty fellows
To the wide world, that is, the gallows.
No, thank 'em for their love, that's worse
Than if they'd throttled 'em at nurse.

* * * *

The sum of all I have to say
Is, that you'd put me in some way,
And your petitioner shall pray.'

In 1698 Prior was sent as Secretary to the Embassy in Paris; and whilst there an anecdote is told of him very characteristic of the Englishman and the courtier.

On visiting Versailles he was conducted through the palace by one of the king's household. His attention was called, as he passed along, to the victories achieved by Louis the Fourteenth, painted by Le Brun. The French gentleman inquiring whether the exploits of King William were likewise depicted on the walls of his palace, Prior answered: 'The monuments of my master's actions are to be seen everywhere but in his own house.'

This anecdote is perfectly characteristic of the poet who composed the famous letter to Boileau on the victory of

Blenheim in 1704, addressed to Queen Anne. Boileau, in his eighth epistle, beginning—

> 'Grand Roi, cesse de vaincre, ou je cesse d'écrire,'

had informed Louis the Fourteenth under what great difficulties he laboured to describe his numerous conquests. 'Sometimes,' he says, 'in the ardour of my zeal I endeavour to measure out the syllables of an ode; at others, I boldly follow out the plan of a sublime Eneid. Thus, continually flattered by a pleasing madness, I perceive my genius daily to decrease, and that my verses without spirit or beauty dishonour my pen, and do no honour to you.' He then solicits his Majesty to give him at least one year's rest, that his muse may recover her vigour, and atone for her lost opportunities.

Prior, in order at once both to chastise 'the faithless arrogance of France,' always assuming to herself victories due to other powers, and also to ridicule this gross flattery, begins his epistle thus:—

> 'Some demon, envying France, misled the fight
> And Mars mistook, though Louis ordered right.'

The following extract is a piece of raillery on Boileau's fourth epistle, in which he 'complains that the king did not consider his poet, but took places in fact, which could not possibly be taken in rhyme':—

> 'When thy young muse invoked the tuneful nine
> To say how Louis did not pass the Rhine,
> What work had we with Wageninghen, Arnheim,
> Places that could not be reduced to rhyme?
> And though the poet made his last efforts,
> Wurts, who could mention in heroicks, Wurts?
> But tell me, hast thou reason to complain
> At the rough triumphs of the last campaign?
> The Danube rescu'd, and the Empire sav'd;
> Say, is the majesty of verse retriev'd?

And would it prejudice thy softer vein,
To sing the princes, Louis and Eugene?
Is it too hard, in happy verse to place,
The Vans and Vanders of the Rhine and Maes?
Her warriors Anna sends, from Tweed and Thames,
That France may fall by more harmonious names.
Can'st thou not Hamilton or Lumley bear?
Would Ingoldsby or Palmes offend thine ear?
And is there not a sound in Marlborough's name
Which thou and all thy brethren ought to claim—
Sacred to verse, and sure of endless fame?'

Occupied during the early period of his life in public employments, at one time Secretary of State, he was honoured with the highest proof of Queen Anne's confidence, by being appointed (in 1712) Minister and Plenipotentiary in France. He was, however, on the change of ministry recalled: his papers were taken possession of by the Earl of Stair, who succeeded him in Paris, and he returned to find himself called upon to give an account of his conduct before the Privy Council. He was put instantly under an arrest, first in his own house and then in that of the messenger of the House of Commons. The next step was a motion for an impeachment, and Sir Robert Walpole was the mover. Nevertheless, no prosecution followed. Prior was confined, and still at the mercy of the House until the year 1717, when he was as unaccountably released as he had been inexplicably imprisoned. Of the injustice of this treatment Prior's own defence, contained in a 'History of the Four Last Years of Queen Anne's Reign,' has furnished the world with all particulars. His share in arranging the Peace of Utrecht, his intimacy with Bolingbroke, and his joining the party of the Tories, are, in fact, the explanations of this bitter season of adversity in his hitherto prosperous life. Prior presents, nevertheless, a striking instance of what education may do to raise a man in this free country. The son of a joiner, his home, the vintner's back parlour, he rose, after successive

employments, to the highest ambassadorial functions. We do not enumerate the previous steps by which his rise was marked, except to state that in 1700 he succeeded the great Locke as a Commissioner of the Board of Trade.

His vindication was left unfinished; but in one passage he had shown in lively colours the extreme to which party-spirit impels men who desire to make themselves conspicuous in politics.

Amongst these was Lord Coningsby, a nobleman of no very exalted intellect, who, after the death of John, Duke of Marlborough, offered his hand to Sarah, the widowed Duchess. Her well-known reply, that the 'wife of Marlborough should never be the wife of anybody else,' silenced Lord Coningsby's suit; but it was not, it seems, so easy to put him down in the House of Commons.

After Sir Robert Walpole had told Prior that he was to be put under an arrest, 'Bos'—as Prior in his narrative calls Lord Boscawen—'played the moralist, and Con (Coningsby) the Christian; but both very awkwardly. Boscawen said that he had often heard Mr. Stepney, who was a wise man and our old friend, repeat this proverb: "Near my shirt, but nearer my skin," and told me that if I remembered that saying, and acted accordingly to it, it would have been better for me. And Con said he had known me a long time, and was heartily sorry for my condition; but all this proceeded from my own fault. Now this kind commiseration did not last above a minute; for the messenger to whose house they intended to confine me being called, Con asked him if his house were secured by bolts and bars? The messenger, who is by birth a gentleman, and a very good-natured man, was astonished at this question, and answered that he never had in his custody but Parliament-prisoners (as he expressed it), and there were neither bolts nor bars in his house. At which Con very angrily said: "Sir, you must secure this prisoner; it is for the safety of the nation: if he escapes you shall answer for it."

And now I met with another hardship, which indeed I could not have expected; as I had all day taken notes of their examination and my answers; and particularly that Mr. Stanhope had by his Majesty's orders informed the committee that from whatever I should say in this examination, nothing should or ought to redound to my own prejudice; nor indeed could it be imagined I should answer upon any other foot; for without the king's consent, I doubt if I ought at all to have answered the committee.'

Four years of private life followed Prior's release. He, who had in early youth been maintained by a fellowship at St. John's, now looking round at his own position, found that it was the only piece of preferment that was left him. Often had he been told when he became a Minister of State, when in Paris he appeared before Louis as an ambassador, that a fellowship was 'too trifling a thing for him to keep;' that it ill became an ambassador to retain it. His answer on such occasions was, that 'everything he had besides was precarious, and when all failed that would be bread and cheese at last, and therefore he did not wish to part with it.'

Grateful for this endowment, Prior left his College a set of books worth two hundred pounds; the books were to be selected by the College out of his own collection. To this benefaction he added that of his own picture, and one of the Earl of Jersey. Over the books—which are magnificently bound—appears therefore the portrait of Prior as ambassador, painted by La Belle, in France. The joiner's son, who ended life as a Fellow of St. John's, appears in that portrait in all the gorgeous costume appropriated in time immemorial to the representative of majesty. The picture is finely painted, and is said to have been a present to Prior from Louis the Fourteenth, who paid, it would appear, a hundred pistoles for it.

The last three years of Prior's existence were passed chiefly at Down Hall, a small property in Essex belonging to Harley

Earl of Oxford. It was at Wimpole, not far from Cambridge, in the house of that same kind friend, that Prior, after a lingering fever, died. He was only fifty-seven years old; yet, how long he seemed to have lived! How much he had achieved since he was first received into St. John's learned and exclusive society of Fellows! His boast was, that he would 'rather be thought a good Englishman than the greatest poet, or the greatest scholar that ever wrote.' He may have fully merited the title he courted: but the Whigs did not give him credit for a very high tone of patriotism. As a poet, he shines more in satire than in sentiment.

Prior was never married; but, in revenge for this contempt of Hymen's chains, fate punished him with a passion for a certain Mistress Elizabeth Cox, a lady by no means of sufficient beauty to excuse a bad temper. His friends, pitying his thraldom, endeavoured to excite 'poor Matt' to rebellion. He had called this lady Cloe in his verses: when told that his mistress was insufferable, he answered in the words of Molière, spoken on a similar occasion, that he was aware of the truth and good intention of their remarks; but he had been so long accustomed to her humours that they were from habit become tolerable to him; 'and that if he took a new mistress bringing with her a new temper, would create a very sensible trouble to conform with.'

Poor as he was, or affected to be, Prior left 500*l.* for his monument. It was erected where he had entered life, a penniless boy, at Westminster Abbey. A fine bust of the poet done by Coriveaux, stands at the head of the monument, and the inscription is written by Dr. Robert Freind, then head master of the school to which Prior did so much credit. The best of Prior's poems are his 'Solomon on the Vanity of the World,' and his 'Carmen Seculare.' Some time before his death, he collected his poems and dedicated them to the Duke of Dorset, the son of him who had raised him from obscurity.

Montague and Prior seem to have been, like many other travellers, good friends when they set out on their journey, but agreeing, as they went on, to take each a different road. Montague, at all events, no longer 'kept company' with the Muses. During the reign of William all went well in Montague's journey of life; he was indeed a favourite of fortune, at every stage of which he seemed to secure fresh success and approval. He 'raised himself,' as Horace Walpole states, 'by his abilities and eloquence in the House of Commons; where he had the honour of being attacked in conjunction with Somers, and of establishing his innocence as clearly.'

Addison celebrated Montague in his account of the greatest English poets; and Steele also drew his character in glowing colours in the dedication to him of his second volume of the 'Spectator.' Pope, however, in the portrait of Bufo, in the epistle to Arbuthnot, revenged Montague's travestie on the 'Hind and Panther' of Dryden.

In the House of Commons, Montague shone as a debater of the very first order. His literary attempts sink, indeed, into obscurity when contrasted with his labours as an orator and a financier; of these a mere brief sketch can here only be offered.

In 1692, he was made a Commissioner of the Treasury. He was then thirty-three years of age, and he had still all the untamed energy of a boy in his composition.

On the memorable 15th of December, 1692, the House of Commons resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means: Somers was in the chair; Montague proposed a new mode of raising money, by loan. Such was the commencement of the National Debt. We do not thank the memory of Charles Montague for this measure. Macaulay ably defends it; the year 1692 had, he says, 'bequeathed a large deficit to the year 1693. It was necessary to devise something. Something was devised; something of which the effects are felt to this day in every part of the globe.'

Then this great historian carries his reader with him through an ingenious explanation; how that the riches of the nation had increased between the Restoration and the Revolution; how it was necessary to employ the surplus, which in our own days could be done, he tells us, 'on the best security that has ever been known in the world, at a little more than three per cent., and that such a matter can be arranged in a few minutes.'

Of course, the difficulty of getting interest in William and Mary's reign, for capital, seems almost incredible in ours. Yet we almost wished we had never learned the secret, so commended by Macaulay—and that Montague had gone on with his poetry, and left us, as he found us, free of debt.

His suggestion was, indeed, hailed without misgivings, for a considerable amount of gold and silver was hidden, it is believed, in secret drawers, and behind wainscots in those days. 'Riches sufficient to equip a navy which would sweep the German Ocean and the Atlantic of French privateers, riches sufficient to array an army which might retake Namûr, and revenge the disaster of Steinkirk, were lying idle, or were passing away from the owners into the hands of sharpers.'* For it was in the year 1688, four years before the commencement of the National Debt, that that word of fear, next in terror to the word 'attorney,' that of stock-jobber, was heard in the City of London.

The House was not even divided when the loan was proposed by Montague; it was carried, and no wonder; ten per cent. was to be the interest given until 1700; then seven per cent.; not too much, perhaps, in those insecure times; but very pleasant figures to look at and think of. It is a satisfaction, nevertheless, to those who did not share this harvest of per-centage, to know that Burke, Hume, and partially Adam Smith, strongly disapproved of Montague's financial scheme.

Montague must now have been a happy man, if unbounded

* Macaulay.

success makes men happy. But he is said also to have regretted that he was not a clergyman. Most men look back with satisfaction to days of struggling, when they have been succeeded by good fortune. And Montague is related to have recalled, with something like wistfulness, the time when he hesitated, a poor scholar, between divinity and politics. Yet he was, says Macaulay, 'in the very situation for which he was peculiarly fitted by nature, and during some years his life was a series of triumphs.'

From the time that he became a Lord of the Treasury, Montague abjured poetry. This, Macaulay truly observes, showed his self-knowledge; for Montague was never destined to soar in the elevated regions of imagination or of invention. A shrewd, brilliant speaker, a clever debater, full of inquiry, before his time in courageous innovations, he was born for the House of Commons, and, in saying that, one implies all absence of romance, if not of true and deep feeling. Macaulay complains that Montague's editors have done him great injustice in placing his 'Man of Honour,' and his 'Battle of the Boyne,' side by side with 'Comus' and 'Alexander's Feast.' But it matters little now; for few modern readers will peruse Montague's effusions either in such company as that, or in isolated inferiority.

Montague wisely became the patron of letters, and was 'fed with dedications.' And he did not by any means dislike those well-seasoned offerings. He became giddy on his pinnacle; vain and arrogant, fond of display, not merely of wit, but of wealth, and ready to accept any amount of flattery, however thickly laid on, and composed of any coarse material.

He was the chief manager of a project for erecting a new East India Company. To him we owe the institution of the Bank of England, the plan of which was formed by William Paterson, an obscure Scotchman; to Montague we owe the restoration of the currency; to him, also, the many years of wretchedness and disease, introduced into this country by the

window-tax. The scheme of bringing over the electoral Prince of Hanover to England was hatched in the house of Montague, who was created soon afterwards Earl of Halifax. It was Lord Halifax who introduced the Italian Opera into London. Much do we owe to this eminent minister; much cause have we also to deprecate his labours.

Halifax during many years was a widower; his first wife was the Countess of Manchester. After her death, he paid his addresses to a lady of birth and fortune; he had however, in the then Lord Shaftesbury, a rival; but one, who generously appreciated the merits of Lord Halifax. Yet the brilliant Montague was unsuccessful, notwithstanding the following letter, of which only a part is given, from Lord Shaftesbury to Lord Molesworth on the subject of the addresses paid by Halifax to this lady.

'If the person talked of be really my rival, and in favour with the father, I must own my case is desperate; not only because I think him, as the world goes, likely enough to make a good (at least a civil) husband, but because, as my aim is not fortune, and his is, he being an old friend, too, I should unwillingly stand between him and an estate, which his liberality has hitherto hindered him from gaining, as great as his advantages have been hitherto in the Government. By what I have said, I believe you may guess who my supposed rival is; or, if you want further hint, 'tis one of the chief of the Junto, an old friend of yours and mine, whom we long sat with in the House of Commons (not often voted with); but who was afterwards taken up to a higher house; and is as much noted for wit, and gallantry, and magnificence as for his eloquence and courtier's character. But whether this be so suited to this meek, good lady's happiness I know not.'

The object of Montague's real passion was, however, the beautiful, young, and gay widow of a Colonel Barton. She was also a niece of Sir Isaac Newton. The toast of the day.

Scandal had attacked Mrs. Barton. Lord Halifax, however, did her justice in the last act of his life: in a codicil to his will, written with his own hand, after bequeathing to Sir Isaac Newton one hundred pounds, as a mark of the great honour and esteem he had for such a man, he bequeathed to Mrs. Catherine Barton five thousand pounds, together with other very valuable property; and he ends with these words:—'These gifts and legacies I leave to her as a token of the sincere love, affection, and esteem I have long had for her person, and as a small recompense for the pleasure and happiness I have had in her conversation. And I strictly charge and command my executor to give all aid, help, and assistance to her in possessing and enjoying what I have hereby given her; and also in doing any act or acts necessary to transfer to her an annuity of two hundred pounds per annum, purchased in Sir Isaac Newton's name, which I hold for her in trust, as appears by a declaration of trust in that behalf.—HALIFAX.'

The illness of which Lord Halifax died was sudden inflammation of the lungs. He expired on the 15th of May, 1715, in the house of Mynheer Davenvoord, the Dutch ambassador, at that time in England.

Thus, out of the coterie assembled at Knowle, Waller, Prior, and Montague passed away. And, before this gifted trio had all gone to their last home, the hatchment had hung over the gateway of Knowle; and the funeral sermon, recording the virtues of him whom his friends so long loved, and mourned, and missed, was heard in the ancient parish church in the village. But, before we erect his monument, enumerate his honours, recite his public acts, give a *catalogue raisonnée* of his ancestors, place the sculptured cherubim outside his coat of arms (for strangely are human and divine things mingled in our churches, witness the staring lion and unicorn, high where the cross alone should be); before we perform these last duties to the living—for

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the dead *know* their utter worthlessness—let us fill up, as we best may, the names that were, in Buckhurst's days, oftenest heard in his noble gallery,—the names that resounded in his bowling-green, or startled the deer in his woods.

Then, as now, society was broken up into the different sets, 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe;' but the severe, we must think, did not stay long at Knowle in Buckhurst's days.

There was the De Grammont set—growing old in Buckhurst's later days; Hamilton sketching their characters as he ate their dinners:—

> 'Auprès d'eux le vif Hamilton
> Toujours armé d'un trait qui blesse,
> Médisoit de l'humaine espèce,
> Et même, d'un peu mieux, dit-on.'

So sang Voltaire—wishing to bring the subject of his verse down to his own level, or up to his own altitude, as people may think.

Hamilton, besides his capital opportunities for drawing portraits, had this advantage, that he was in large companies a silent man, conversable among the few only. He had, he tells us himself, no brilliancy; and was dull at an impromptu. He was, alas! poor,—poor when he began life, poor when he ended it. What his biographer calls 'extemporary gaiety' was not, therefore, in his way.

He kept all his sparkle for his 'Memoirs of De Grammont,' the most amusing bad book in our language. But then, what materials he had! What a hero to begin with! What a king to write a chronicle about! What ladies! What men! What times!

Despite Voltaire's hint, '*et même, d'un peu mieux,*' Anthony Hamilton was no immoral scoffer. He died—if he did not live—a religious man. We are assured he was a respectable man; things go by comparison. Hamilton has,

in his way, done an injury to society, which makes it difficult to believe he had any nice sense of virtue, or correct standard of honour. He tells of the most heinous depravity in the calmest tone; licentiousness, according to him, needs no excuse. Success or non-success are the tests of what is right or wrong. We may excuse him, for he was partly Irish, educated in France, and brought, just at the dangerous period of his life, to England.

Anthony Hamilton's father was a cadet of the noble house of Abercorn; his mother was sister of James, first Duke of Ormond. His earliest recollections must have been of Owen O'Neale's taking Roscrea, in County Tipperary, where his family lived, and putting man, woman, and child to the sword. Lady Hamilton and her family escaped to France; and lived, in great poverty, for some time at Caen.

The family were Roman Catholics; and Anthony served in the army of Louis the Fourteenth, until, on the accession of James the Second, the door being opened to Catholics, he entered the Irish army in 1686.

After the overthrow of James's power he returned, with his family, to France, and resided almost entirely near, if not with the exiled family of Stuart. In the precincts of the dismal-looking palace of St. Germains his once handsome form and face were seen, perambulating at an early hour into the forest. In the evening, literature and poetry occupied a life which was rendered purposeless by the misfortunes of others. A hopeless attachment added to the pensive expression of his countenance. At St. Germains the family of the Duke of Berwick, the natural son of James the Second, by Arabella Churchill, resided. The Duke (ancestor of the Duc de Fitz-James in France) was an amiable man, and partial to Hamilton. The Duchess of Berwick had a sister, Henrietta Bulkeley, granddaughter as well as the Duchess, and two other sisters, of Henry, first Lord Bulkeley. Too poor to marry, they had the consolations of friendship and contiguity.

Henrietta laughed at the novels and romances then in vogue, '*plus Arabes qu'en Arabie.*' She incited her lover to write 'La Fleur d'Epine,' which was praised by La Harpe as a work of original genius; and we can readily believe that the author of the 'Mémoires de Grammont' would write a good novel.

It was not until 1704 that Hamilton began these memoirs. It was first proposed to offer the task of recording the life of a courtier and—with reverence be it said—of an adventurer, to Boileau; but De Grammont shrank from entrusting his memory—and he was then eighty-five years of age—to the malignant satirist whom he could not trust. He therefore chose Hamilton. It has been said that De Grammont wrote his own memoirs; but this is wholly unsubstantiated. Bussy Rabutin, who knew him well, states that even in his younger days De Grammont could not write at all; and that Hamilton was the true biographer is beyond a doubt. The materials were collected from De Grammont's recollections; vain-glorious sketching, but very characteristic of the man and of his times.

Such was the origin of this famous book. Hamilton, pen in hand, twenty years younger than his brother-in-law, yet still not young, the spotless paper before him, the failing old man by his side, preparing to dash in incidents and characters with a free hand; to sully for ever the purity of that page; to reveal what the dead—save that old man—alone, could tell, —would form a pleasant subject for the pencil of some of those delightful masters of art who have given us real life in true colours.

In 1707 De Grammont slept with his fathers. The 'Memoirs' were published; but it must have seemed to Hamilton as if ages had elapsed since the days when Buckhurst was Buckhurst, and Charles the Second told his best stories,—so great was the change.

Hamilton left a slight sketch of the court at St. Germains,

which supplies to us the few traces we have of his existence whilst identified with that court.

The exiled king, it is true, he tells us, wanted no means of state during his own life. Forty thousand pounds annually were paid to him from the treasury of Louis the Fourteenth. Our former monarch was a pensioner on France. A guard of honour of the 'finest soldiers in Europe; an army of huntsmen, added,' as Macaulay expresses it, 'to every charm of rural life,' as he thus styles the stiff vicinity of St. Germains, might have made existence, even under the heavy cloud of abdication, endurable.

But that existence was, if a courtier wished to be ever at peace, passed in an incessant round of those religious exercises which are calculated, upon frequent repetition, to dull, and not to excite devotional feelings. Disputation, intolerance against Protestantism, varied the monotony of existence, but varied it only to embitter people against each other. The little court was a hot-bed of calumny; rendered more revolting, more bitter by an outward show of self-righteousness and bigotry. Such is the account given by Hamilton in his '*Zeneyde*.'

Hamilton died in 1720, aged seventy-two; time was thus allowed him to turn his thoughts to higher themes than those which had employed his youth. The following passage in his '*Reflections*,' is supposed to refer to his own situation, his own wish to live in innocence of manners:—

> 'Fille du ciel, pure Innocence!
> Asile contre tous nos maux,
> Vrai centre du parfait repos!
> Heureux celui dont la constance,
> Vous conservant dans l'abondance,
> Ne vous perd point dans les travaux
> D'une longue et triste indigence.'

Even Horace Walpole allows that Hamilton was superior to the indelicacy of the court. Much may be allowed to a

biographer of those times, yet Hamilton, one might suppose, would, in his apostrophe to Innocence, combine a regret that it had been his choice, or his fate, to record the days of Charles the Second. He has, however, left a work which men of very opposite opinions to himself admire. Gibbon praises 'the ease and purity of Hamilton's inimitable style,' and Macaulay calls his memoirs 'the most highly finished and vividly coloured picture of the English court when the English court was gayest.' To return to the centre of the circle at Knowle.

The political career of Charles, Earl of Dorset, closed in 1697, when he retired with every mark of royal favour, and resigning his office of Chamberlain, spent the short remainder of his days in the luxury of leisure.

If prosperity and affection could make old age happy, the last years of Charles, Earl of Dorset, must have been so. He had one failing, common to minds of quick sensibility, that of an excitable temper; but it was coupled to so much generosity and candour, that it seems hardly to have been felt by others, even as an injury. It was he who suffered, and they the subjects of his transports of passion, of which he was always ashamed, who benefited.

'During these little excesses,' Prior, in his character of the Earl, tells us, 'I have known his servants purposely get into his way, that they might make a merit of it immediately after; for he who had the good fortune to be chid, was almost sure of being rewarded for it.'

This excitable temperament was, perhaps, in part hereditary, as well as the effect of the early indulgence from which the highly-born child too often suffers, and evil examples were not wanting. Amongst Lord Dorset's elder relatives, Anne, Countess of Dorset and of Pembroke, the wife of Richard, Earl of Dorset, shone conspicuous. 'High-born and high-spirited,' Walpole calls her, she left, as ladies of old historical families ought to do, 'Sundry Memorials of

herself and her progenitors,' as well as 'Memoirs of her husband, Richard, Earl of Dorset' never printed.

The heiress of the Cliffords, Earls of Cumberland, this lady was munificent, religious, and 'disposed to letters.' She was active in other respects; it was she who placed the monument over the remains of Edmund Spenser, as well as one over those of Daniel the poet. She founded two hospitals, and repaired six castles and seven churches. Thus nobly did she expend her wealth; but, when roused, she was a lioness in fierceness. Having committed the fatal error of marrying a second time, him whom Walpole calls that memorable simpleton, Philip, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, she soon separated from him. The capital story of her answer to Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State to Charles the Second, who ventured to nominate to her a member for the borough of Appleby, is well known.

'I have been bullied by an usurper, I have been neglected by a Court, but I am not to be dictated to by a subject. Your man shan't stand.

'ANNE DORSET,
'PEMBROKE and MONTGOMERY.'

After his retirement from office, Lord Dorset continued to appear sometimes at the Council as a mark of respect to the Government. But he had never recovered the effects of a voyage with King William to the Hague. He was, therefore, as one of his biographers well expresses it, giving as 'much leisure to the relief of those pains with which it had pleased God to afflict him, and indulging the reflection of a mind that had looked through the world with too piercing an eye, and was grown weary of the prospect,' retreated with dignity from a station he was now incapacitated to fill. Friend, patron, host, inestimable in all those characters, he continued to the last. He died at Bath in 1705-6, on the 19th of January, and was buried with his ancestors at Withiam.

With Dorset a circle of clever, rather than of great men, was broken up; but a new era was approaching—the Augustan age was at hand: fresh assemblies of ardent politicians and of shameless libellers were henceforth to be found in other houses, and in various localities; and amid these, arose a class of men hitherto unknown, the essayists of common life —Steele, Addison, Tickell, and their numerous imitators.

CHAPTER V.

PERIODICAL LITERATURE. — QUEEN ANNE'S REIGN. — THE INCREASE OF PUBLIC JOURNALS. — THE INFERIOR EDUCATION OF WOMEN ALLUDED TO BY ADDISON. — ONE DESIGN OF THE TATLER AND SPECTATOR TO IMPROVE THIS. — THE TATLER; ITS ORIGIN. — THE SPECTATOR. — STEELE AND ADDISON. — THE LONDON GAZETTE. — CHARACTER OF SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY. — STEELE'S FAMOUS EXPEDITION TO SCOTLAND. — ANECDOTE BY SIR WALTER SCOTT. — STEELE'S CHARACTER.—CIBBER'S DESCRIPTION OF STEELE.—HIS WIFE'S CONDUCT TO HIS NATURAL DAUGHTER. — HER DEATH. — HIS REMORSE. — ANECDOTES OF HIS EXTRAVAGANCE. — SPECIMENS OF STEELE'S STYLE OF WRITING. — HIS LATTER DAYS. — DEATH.

CHAPTER V.

FULLER, in one of his proverbs, says, 'There is much more learning than knowledge in the world.' The public, in the commencement of the eighteenth century, seem to have acknowledged this truth; a thirst for general knowledge was prevalent; a want was found and felt; and that want was supplied.

Some slight notion has been given, in a preceding chapter, of the condition of the periodical press, and of the meagre and constrained intelligence afforded by newspapers. That source of information, imperfect as it still was, had been terribly interrupted during the civil wars, by the confusion and hindrance produced in the Post Office, an institution which we owe to Charles the First. On the accession of William and Mary it was put on a more secure footing, and on a more extended plan than previously: and many of the leading journals were published expressly on the days most convenient to despatch them by post into the country; so that the public were accommodated.

The public journals had been rapidly increasing, and between the years 1661 and 1688 about seventy different ones had appeared. Of these, the 'London Gazette' is the only one that still exists; it still deals with drawing-rooms at court, or promotions at the Horse Guards; still prescribes how ladies, when a royal personage dies, shall have their linen

fringed; what hue and texture their fans are to be; whether bombazeen or silk shall best show their loyalty; and when these solemn ordinances are to cease. A shadow, too, of old days, creeps over the 'London Gazette,' as it prescribes to gentlemen their due amount of mourning in regard to knee and shoe buckles; their swords and hat bands; as well as how long they are to wail and weep in black broad cloth, and that alone. Next comes an array of bankrupts and dividends, polluting the same page, for times are no longer the same as when the 'London Gazette,'—started, as it was first, in 1665, just after the Restoration,—was expressly to contain only what was *agreeable* to the King. It was called at first the 'Oxford Gazette,' having been originally published at that city, whither Charles the Second retired during the Great Plague.

The reign of Queen Anne was more fertile in works of every description than that of any of her predecessors. Periodical literature flourished; and the first daily newspaper appeared. Authors were protected from their natural enemies, publishers, by a law giving them copyrights; a stamp was imposed on newspapers, and a duty on advertisements.

It was still a matter of courage, indeed, to conduct a newspaper. A young gentleman named Tutchin, who had joined the Duke of Monmouth's rising in the reign of James the Second, was, in 1704, the editor of a paper called the 'Observator.' Tutchin's mind had been early embittered by the hideous cruelty of Judge Jeffreys. He had been put into prison, then brought from a cell in Dorchester gaol to receive sentence—without a trial—from that iniquitous judge; it was decreed that he should be imprisoned seven years, and whipped through all the market towns in Dorsetshire once a year, besides paying an enormous fine to the king.

What a scene it must have been. The court was full of ladies interested in the fate of young Tutchin. When the sentence was given, many burst into tears. Jeffreys, turning

to them, said with his wonted want of dignity, as well as excess of savage wrath, 'Ladies, if you did but know what a villain this is as well as I do, you would say that this sentence is not half bad enough for him.'

'My lord,' said the Clerk of Arraigns, standing up, 'there are a great many market towns in this county, the sentence reaches to a whipping about once a fortnight, and he is a very young man.'

'Ay,' replied Jeffreys, 'he *is* a young man, but an old rogue, and all the interest in England shall not reverse the sentence I have passed on him.'

Tutchin was now, under the milder rule of Queen Anne, tried for a libel; a verdict was given against him, but he got off on some legal point put forward by his counsel, and continued his journalism. One night he was, however, waylaid and cruelly beaten; and he, who had escaped the sentence of Jeffreys, died of the wounds inflicted by the fierceness of party employing brute force in its cause.

Jonathan Swift—a name never heard without mingled emotions of admiration and disgust—was one of those who had abused Tutchin for his articles in the 'Observator.'

To instruct, reform, and amuse society, something more general than fierce political writing was, it was felt, requisite. The commencement of those delightful periodicals, which still form our standard of language, our code of minor morals, our lessons in manners, marks, consistently, the reign of the placid Anne. Party spirit, it is true, ran high in her time, but it was like the sky-rocket, bursting suddenly, blazing and rising high, but dying away almost innocuous—extinct in a minute. Politics, on the other hand, in the days of her predecessors, exploded into awful conflagrations, which completely shattered and nearly extinguished social happiness.

Dr. Nathan Drake, in his essays in the 'Tatler,' 'Spectator,' and 'Guardian,' remarks, that 'to introduce and sup-

port a taste for elegant literature,—to paint virtue in her most alluring form,—to inculcate attention to the decencies, proprieties, and minuter graces of domestic life,—and to dissipate, by well-turned ridicule and humour, those fashionable follies and lighter shades of vice, which, though apparently trivial, undermine the foundations of our happiness,—form the legitimate objects of a periodical paper. That these, however, may produce their full effect no common-rate ability is demanded on the part of the author. To beauty, accuracy, and vivacity of composition must be added strength of imagination and versatility of style.'

The 'Tatler,' first published in 1709, is the earliest model of such a paper as is described in the preceding passage. Since that time England has never been without a periodical of that kind to enliven the lovers of light literature, as well as to gratify deep thinkers and students.

Two former papers, 'The Rehearsal,' by Charles Lesly, and 'The Review,' by Defoe, had prepared the public for a work of this class. 'The Rehearsal,' however, treated of public affairs only, and was written in the form of dialogue. 'The Review' was, in every respect, far superior; it treated both of politics and foreign and domestic news, and comprised what the gifted author styled a '*Scandal* Club,' in which questions in law and divinity, love and marriage, language and poetry, were agitated. There was not, however, sufficient of permanent interest in the 'Review,' and in spite of the genius of its author, it sank into oblivion, and a complete set of the series is not now extant.*

The elegant and useful labours of Steele began at a time when literature and manners in this country were in a condition far inferior to that which now, to our infinite advantage and credit, prevails amongst us. Although the reign of Anne has been called the Augustan age, owing to the coexistence of several celebrated writers, the middle and higher

* Drake.

classes were very far from being either polished or well-informed. The gentleman of the eighteenth century was not necessarily well-educated, and to be learned was rather to class oneself with the hard-working scholar. To display it, was to be guilty of pedantry.

'That general knowledge,' observes Johnson (in his 'Life of Addison'), 'which now circulates in common talk was then rarely to be found; men not professing learning were not ashamed of ignorance; and in the female world any acquaintance with books was distinguished only to be censured.' 'Contempt for all literary acquirement was then a certain proof of gentility, and ignorance, (we quote Dr. Nathan Drake,) the characteristic of superior station.'* Times indeed had changed since the days of those illustrious women who, in the reigns of Elizabeth, James the First, and Charles the First, had honourably cultivated letters.

We think, then, with many others, that we should hardly 'assign to this era of our history the epithet of Augustan.' It is solely indeed to a nation that has long cherished a strong relish for literature in all its departments, whose taste is pure and correct, and which fosters in her bosom every rising genius, that the title of Augustan can be given, and not to the casual appearance of a few luminaries, surrounded by wastes of interminable darkness. Nor was it greatly to be wondered at that letters and acquirements had lost in general estimation during the reign of Charles the Second. The fine gentleman of the old comedy was but a reflex of the fine gentleman of real life; unprincipled, extravagant, fond of wild adventures and of practical jokes, he might be witty, but he could not, without losing the position for which he was so eminently qualified, be either religious, or well-read, or even inquiring.

The moral tone of the fair sex in the reign of Queen Anne was of a far better description than that of the male portion of

* Drake, vol. i, p. 33.

the community. English girls were educated up to about the same mark as German women of a mediocre class are in the present time. To be good housewives, to preserve, to cook, to carve, to pickle, to understand fine-drawing and clear-starching, to spin, to read, to write, to spell, if you could—if you could not, to leave it alone—to dress becomingly without undue solicitude to cleanliness, to be perfectly polite, to hold a hand at cards, to dance a measure (or a minuet), and to attend church regularly, were attributes to which all good mothers aspired for their daughters. All this was to be done in those days cheaply. Convents were gone out, but schools for females were not come in; the girl might pick up reading and writing with her brothers, or she might have the parson of the parish to teach her—(even Evelyn, we find, learned to read in the church porch of Wotton)—or she might have a sort of *gouvernante*, or head nurse, to spell through the Bible and a few romances with her, but there education ended. The 'Spectator' thus alludes to the inferiority to which women had sunk in his time:—

'Their amusements,' he writes, 'seem contrived for them rather as they are women than reasonable creatures, and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their train the principal employment of their lives. The sorting a suit of ribands is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweetmeats.'

To soften this picture, Addison is induced to add that he knows, at the same time, many ladies of exalted rank who had every charm of intellect and taste.

We can all, however, or most of us—at all events those not in their *première jeunesse*—remember the small compass of knowledge possessed by our grandmothers; their stately

forms and their narrow minds,—the consequently stern prejudices and obvious weaknesses, old superstitions and bad grammar alike clinging to them; nothing but the charm of *manner*—a science in their time—remaining to redeem them from being actually inferior; more illiterate than our present ladies' maids they certainly were.

All this Steele and Addison, and their 'staff,' came to correct, if not conquer. We owe them much. Sir Richard Steele had, as a dramatist, the honour of first putting the virtues on the stage, and, as an essayist, of improving the tone of morals in private life. He knew the heart well, and he did not clothe the virtues in all the dull proprieties alone, he allowed them to take in their train wit and humour; they approached in smiles; not in forbidding self-righteousness, but in a gentle indulgence to the weaknesses of the times.

In morality, tenderness, and discrimination of character, Steele was superior to Wycherley and to Congreve, yet he failed in his play of 'The Lying Lovers,' and that failure induced him to retire, and to begin a new line.

The times certainly favoured Steele's new scheme. During the latter part of the reign of King William the press had been emancipated from censorship which, amongst its other operations, had very nearly mutilated Milton's 'Paradise Lost.' 'From the day on which the emancipation of our literature was accomplished,' says Macaulay, 'the purification of our literature began.'

As in France, where the censorship of the press is in full force, the morals of the community were never considered so long as the writers kept clear of political allusions of an offensive character. The result is that almost all fiction, all dramatic works, and poetry mostly, are so debased in France, so tainted,—the poison is so interwoven with the whole substance of the production, that it is impossible long to read French works of this class, without injury to the taste, if not

to the tone of the character; they both, however, to a certain extent, suffer together.

The 'Tatler,' so called in compliment to the fair sex, was placed by its author under the jurisdiction of the ladies. Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., a well-conceived and well-supported character, is its supposed editor. That name had already appeared before the public. Swift had written 'Predictions' for the year 1708, and wanting a *nom de plume*, he accidentally saw the name of Bickerstaff on a locksmith's shop, and adopted it,—adding to it the Christian name of Isaac.

Under the character of an astrologer the Bickerstaff of Swift attacked John Partridge, the celebrated almanack-maker, who pretended to predict the events of each forthcoming year.

The title of Swift's pamphlet was: 'Predictions for the year 1708; wherein the month and the day of the month are set down, the persons named, and the great actions and events of each year particularly related as they will come to pass. Written to prevent the people of England from being farther imposed upon by vulgar almanack-makers. By Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.'

Swift began his predictions with saying, 'My first prediction is but a trifle:' it related to Partridge, the almanack-maker. 'I have consulted the star of his nativity by my own rules, and find he will infallibly die on the 29th of March next, about eleven at night, of a raging fever; therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time.'

This was succeeded by 'An Answer to Bickerstaff,' and another pamphlet, 'An Account of the Death of Mr. Partridge, the Almanack-maker, upon the 29th instant;' both by Swift. Poor Partridge, much annoyed, published an advertisement at the end of that year's almanack to say that he wishes to 'inform all his loving countrymen, that he is still living, and

in health, and they are knaves that reported it otherwise.' The advertisement was copied by Steele in the 'Tatler.'

Upon which Steele in another paper thus facetiously refers to Partridge.

'Whereas a commission of interment has been awarded against Dr. John Partridge, philomath, professor of physic and astrology; and whereas the said Partridge hath not surrendered himself, nor shown cause to the contrary; these are to certify that the company of upholders will proceed to bury him from Cordwainers' Hall on Tuesday, the twenty-ninth instant, where any six of his surviving friends, who still believe him to be alive, are desired to come prepared to hold up the pall.

'Note: we shall light away at six in the evening, there being to be a sermon.'

Swift's pamphlet had, eventually, so much celebrity as to receive the honour of being burnt in Portugal by the Inquisition; its authors and readers being also condemned, though not sent to the stake.

Having thus fixed on a name so signally marked out for fame, Steele formed the plan of his papers: 'Gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment,' formed the first subjects; next, poetry; 3, learning; 4, foreign and domestic news; 5, miscellaneous subjects. These topics might be discussed either at White's Chocolate-house; or Will's Coffee-house; or at the Grecian Coffee-house; or at St. James's Coffee-house; or in 'Mr. Bickerstaff's' private apartment. The object of the 'Tatler,' Steele, in his dedication of the first volume of the 'Tatler,' states, was 'merely to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour.' The name of the editor of the 'Tatler' was a profound secret; the periodical was commenced on the 12th of April, 1709, and was published three times a week;

* No. 96.

the secret of its authorship was revealed to Addison by Steele's insertion in one of the papers of a critique on a passage in 'Virgil' formerly communicated to Addison. Henceforth the assistance of that early friend was obtained, and highly valued by Steele.

He acknowledged it in his preface with that grace and warmth peculiar to himself, for Steele had the tenderest of hearts, and the greatest delicacy of sentiment possible. 'I have only one gentleman,' he writes, 'who will be nameless, to thank for any frequent assistance to me, which indeed it would have been barbarous in him to have denied to one with whom he has lived in an intimacy from childhood, considering the great ease with which he is able to dispatch the most entertaining pieces of this nature. This good office he performed with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that I fared like a distressed prince, who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid. I was undone by my auxiliary; when I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him.'*

The 'Tatler' was continued until January 2nd, 1710-11, when it was dropped, because, as Steele affirmed, 'the purpose was wholly lost by his being so long understood as the author and conductor.' Those who write can easily enter into Steele's ideas on this point. The notoriety of an avowed authorship is fatally oppressive to those whose province it is to attack prevalent follies, or even to extol prevalent tastes.

On the 1st of March, 1711, the world was however more than consoled by the appearance of the 'Spectator.' The interim between that date and the discontinuance of the 'Tatler' had been employed by Steele and Addison in forming the best model for a periodical work that has ever been known.

The 'Spectator' was published daily. In the second number Steele, coming forward as the conductor and originator, describes the club, and introduces those characters which

* Drake, i. p. 78.

render the 'Spectator' so life-like, so dramatic, and fascinating. On Addison, however, devolved the task of keeping up that part of the 'Spectator,' the 'history of whose mind and feelings pervades the greater part of the design, and gives it an unity, an individuality, and organization which no mere series of essays can pretend to.'* The portraits of Sir Roger de Coverley and of Will Honeycomb—rich in humour and nature—were chiefly drawn by Addison; whilst 'the Templar,' Captain Sentry, Sir Andrew Freeport, and the Clergyman, were allotted to Steele. The success of the 'Spectator' was almost instantaneous. Fourteen thousand copies a day were sold;* such is the statement of Dr. Fleetwood in a letter to the Bishop of Salisbury. Dr. Johnson estimates it much lower. It was continued without interruption until Dec. 6th, 1712, when the seventh volume was completed. It was resumed on June 19th, 1714, and was then issued three times a week. On the 20th of December in the same year it was closed, the eighth volume being then completed.

Steele, the generous, imprudent Steele, retired to Hampstead to write his exquisite essays in the 'Spectator.' It is pleasant to think that on the acclivity of the hill between Hampstead and London a picturesque cottage is still standing which bears the name of Steele's cottage. In his lifetime it was an isolated abode, commanding a lovely view over the rich valley long since covered with houses. Pope called it a 'solitude.' 'I am at a solitude,' he writes, in one of his letters, 'an house between Hampstead and London, wherein *Sir Charles Sedley died.* This circumstance set me a thinking and ruminating upon the employments in which men of wit exercise themselves.' It was said of Sedley, who breathed his last in this room:—

> 'Sedley has that prevailing gentle art
> Which can with a resistless charm impart,
> The loosest wishes to the chastest heart,' &c.

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* Drake.

'This was a happy talent,' continues Swift, 'to a man of the town; but I dare say, without presuming to make uncharitable conjectures as to the author's present condition, he would rather have it said of him that he prayed

'O Thou, my voice inspire,
Who touch'd Isaiah's hallow'd lips with fire.'*

This is a solemn speculation. And it is not easy to know whether Pope treats it in the only sense in which it ought to be considered. Here Steele wrote and received his friends. Pecuniary difficulties induced him, it is said, to retreat to the former refuge of the dissolute Sedley; yet he appears to have made no secret of his abode. Pope and other members of the Kit-Kat Club used to call on him here, and take him in their carriages to the Flask tavern on Hampstead Heath, where the literati held their summer meetings. It was, however, probably chiefly for quiet that Steele travelled each day from London to Hampstead. He generally returned at night to the metropolis to rejoin his wife and children in Bury Street.

During the interval between the seventh and eighth volumes of the 'Spectator,' Steele had projected the 'Guardian.' The supposititious editor was Mr. Ironside, guardian to the 'Fitzard' family, a venerable Nestor, more dull than Steele had intended; yet his project was a good one.

'My design,' he said,† 'upon the whole, is no less than to make the pulpit, the bar, and the stage all act in concert in the care of piety, justice, and virtue; for I am past all the regards of this life, and have nothing to manage with *any person or party;* but to deliver myself, as becomes an old man with one foot in the grave, and one who thinks he is passing to eternity.'

It would have been fortunate for Steele had he adhered to this excellent programme; but the 'Guardian' was sub-

* Drake, i. p. 84. † Ibid., p. 86.

sequently made the vehicle of party politics. After extending to one hundred and seventy-five numbers, it was suddenly dropped, owing to a quarrel between Steele and Tonson, the publisher: and it was certainly done in an unworthy manner. Steele was bound by a heavy penalty to Tonson to continue the 'Guardian;' but, by dropping it for a few days, and commencing under the title of 'The Englishman,' and printing the papers for Berkeley, the work was resumed. Steele then began those attacks on the 'Examiner' which eventually subjected him to a prosecution from the House of Commons.

Steele had imbibed, by studying carefully the laws of our country, a great admiration for the liberal views of our constitution, and of the royal prerogative, which have contributed so powerfully to the stability of our institutions. The death of William the Third was a terrible check to his hopes of some appointment which should reward his zeal. But he had a friend in Addison, whose mediation procured him, through the patronage of Halifax and Sunderland, the post of Gazetteer. In performing his duties in that office, Steele declared, that looking upon the 'London Gazette' as 'the lowest Minister of State, he never erred against the rule observed by most ministers, of keeping the Gazette very innocent and insipid,'—in which he certainly succeeded. Henceforth Sir Richard's periodical essays were too closely connected with politics to occupy more of the pages of this work, than to observe that they had their reward. During his editorship of the 'Tatler' he had taken so much pains, on every possible opportunity, to extol the Whig ministry, that in 1710 he was appointed a Commissioner of the Stamp Office; a post which he resigned, in a letter couched in very spirited and independent terms, on the accession of Harley, Earl of Oxford, to power.

The reign of George the First again changed Steele's position as a public man.

Amongst other marks of favour, after being knighted, and becoming member for Boroughbridge, in Yorkshire, he was presented by Sir Robert Walpole with 500*l.* for special services. Amongst these, was his famous expedition into Scotland, as one of the Commissioners for the Forfeited Estates. Steele had a notion that he could reconcile the two churches,—that of the Presbytery, in Scotland, to the Church of England. A sincere friend to his own church, he was desirous of restoring the ancient Episcopacy of Scotland. But he soon found that he had indeed to deal with a stiff-necked people. He mixed freely with the Presbyterian clergy, but in vain. All he said only added to the emphasis with which the preachers whom he hoped to win over, sent him and all their flocks to the devil every Sunday. Amongst these was a Mr. Hart, commonly called the 'Hangman of the Gospel,' from his taste for descanting on what he termed 'The terrors of the Law.' Steele was enchanted with personages so new to him. In order to gain an insight into other classes, he made a grand feast, during his stay at Edinburgh; and whilst the servants were expecting notable and noble guests, commanded them to go into the streets and to bring in fifty of the most wretched beggars, of which, in those days, there were in Scotland multitudes. These humble, astounded guests, intermingled with decayed tradesmen, were seated at the table; Sir Richard at the head. A memorable scene followed. Well plied with whiskey-punch and wine, the beggars gave free scope to their native humour, and their fund of anecdote, and narrative of wild adventure. Sir Richard afterwards declared that, besides the pleasure of feeding the hungry, he collected, on that occasion, a store sufficient to form a good comedy.

One of his adventures in Scotland formed the subject of much merriment on his return. It is related in Scott's 'Border Minstrelsy.' The scene of its occurrence was a hill near to Hoddom Castle, an ancient structure erected by

Lord Herries of Herries, between the years 1437 and 1484.

'On the top of a hill, near Hoddom Castle,' relates Scott, 'there is a square tower, built of hewn stone, over the door of which are carved the figures of a dove and a serpent, and betwixt them the word *Repentance*. Hence the building, though its proper name is Trailbrow, is more frequently called the Tower of Repentance. It was anciently used as a beacon; and the Border laws direct a watch to be maintained, with a fire-pan and bell, to give the alarm when the English crossed, or approached the river of Annan.

'A certain Lord Herries,—about the date of the transaction tradition is silent,—was famous among those who used to rob and steal (*convey*, the wise it call). This lord, returning from England with many prisoners, whom he had unlawfully enthralled, was overtaken by a storm, in crossing the Solway Firth; and, in order to relieve his boat, he cut all their throats and threw them into the sea. Feeling great qualms of conscience, he built this square tower, carving over the door, which is about half-way above the building, and had formerly no stairs to it, the figures above mentioned, of a dove and a serpent, emblems of remorse and grace, and the motto, 'Repentance.'

'It is said that Sir Richard Steele, riding near this place, saw a shepherd-boy reading his Bible, and asked him what he learned from it? "The way to heaven," answered the boy. "And can you show it me?" said Sir Richard, in banter. "You must go by that tower," replied the shepherd, and he pointed to the "Tower of Repentance."'*

* Old inhabitants of Edinburgh can remember an aged, worn, vivacious man, courteous in manners—the Horace Walpole of the North—Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe. A beautiful fragment of his, called 'The Lord Herries, his Complaint,' shows that the antiquary had taste, as well as research. It began:—

'Bright shone the moon on Hoddom's wall,
Bright on Repentance Tower,
Mirk was the Laird of Hoddom's saul,
That chief sae sad and sour.'

Steele's life was one of incessant vicissitudes. Sometimes, flushed with success, favoured by the ministry, his spirits knew no bounds: he spent freely that which he ought to have paid away in debt. His failings proceeded from that fatally sanguine character which counts on money before the coin actually jingles in the purse. Such men are injurious to society, from example, for nothing is so infectious as the spendthrift's pleasant vices. Yet Steele had the softest and gentlest nature. The unfortunate were always his peculiar care. In his prosperity no hand was so open, no heart so tender, as that of him who could hardly be thought competent to the care of a five-pound note on his own account.

Then he was convivial,—not habitually intemperate,—but convivial to the very verge of that wretched tendency. His delight was to stimulate Addison,—slow, cold, and diffident,—till the witty, eloquent, fascinating Joseph showed himself, and set the table, not in a roar, as Steele did, but smiling with a more refined gratification.

One evening, Hoadley, then Bishop of Bangor, among other wits, attended, upon a pressing invitation, one of the Whig meetings at the 'Trumpet' in Sheer Lane. It was the 4th of November; and Steele, who was present, drank enthusiastically to the immortal memory of King William the Third. In the midst of the carousals—wherein Steele tried to 'drink Addison up' to the point at which he was to be agreeable—the butler, named John Sly, came into the room with a brimming tankard of ale in his hand, to drink to the 'immortal memory,' &c. Sly, to do the thing in loyal style, came in on his knees, not quite sober. Bishop Hoadley was sitting next to Steele. 'Do laugh,' Steele whispered to his lordship, ''tis humanity to laugh.'

The Bishop's 'humanity' was soon again called for: Steele being 'mellow,' to use the term of those days, was put into a chair and sent home. Nothing would satisfy him but being carried to the Bishop of Bangor's. It was very

late: the chairmen were well accustomed to gentlemen in that situation; so they carried him home and got him upstairs. Then, Steele was so polite he would wait on them down again: at last he was prevailed on to go to bed. Morning came; and with it came repentance. Steele was not sufficiently lost not to be ashamed. He sent the Bishop this distich:

> 'Virtue with so much ease in Bangor sits,
> All faults he pardons, though he none commits.'

Alas! such faults as Steele's were pardoned and committed over and over again. Lady Mary Wortley Montague perfectly appreciated his character when she compared it to that of Henry Fielding. 'They both agreed in wanting money, in spite of all their friends; and would have wanted it, if their hereditary lands had been as extensive as their imagination. Yet each of them was so formed for happiness it is pity he was not immortal.'

Cibber's description of Steele's mode of proceeding with the managers of Drury Lane, is as true a picture of an improvident man as has ever been penned.

'Though no man alive can write better of economy than he, yet perhaps no man is more above the drudgery of practising it. He was often in want of money; and while we were in friendship with him we assisted his occasions. But this compliance had so unfortunate an effect, that it only heightened his importunity of borrowing more, and the more we lent, the less he minded us, or showed any concern for our welfare. Upon this, we stopped our hands at once, and peremptorily refused to advance another shilling, till by the balance of our accounts it became due to him. This treatment, though we hope not in the least unjustifiable, we have reason to believe so ruffled his temper, that he at once was as short with us as we had been with him, for from that day he never came near us; nay, he not only continued to

neglect what he should have done, but did what he ought not to have done.'

He retired, previous to a paralytic seizure, to Hereford, and there was lodged and boarded in the house of a mercer. Swift wrote that Steele had retired.

> 'From perils of an hundred jails,
> Withdrew to starve and die in Wales.'

His affairs, when he retired, were as much deranged as those of a ruined man could be. An estate of 400*l.* a year, left him by his wife, the beloved Mary Scurlock, was mortgaged: Steele's honest host acted as his agent. The sweetness and benevolence of Steele's temper lasted as long as his shattered frame endured. He loved the poor and humble, and they loved him. Often would he be carried out in the summer evenings to see the country people at their sports, and, with his pencil, give an order on the mercer for a new gown to the best dancer. 'In the year 1727,' writes Mr. Victor, 'when I was a *levée hunter*, and making an interest with the first minister, that good old man, hearing of it, inclosed me an open letter to Sir Robert Walpole, that, I remember, began thus: "*If the recommendation of the most obliged man can be of any service to the bearer*—." Sir Robert received it with his usual politeness.'*

Sir Richard was, it is said, a prey to the deepest regret and repentance: not 'unavailing,' as one of his biographers calls it, for it prepared him for a world where such repentance is accepted, and where the heart—the erring heart—is seen through and through; not as we see it, covered and defaced with all the artificial surface of prudence over its throbbings. He left Hereford for Llangunnor in Carmarthenshire, to reside on his estate, the mortgagee kindly permitting him to do so. He was not wholly forgotten even in this seclusion—friends still loved his memory, and still sent him letters,

* Drake, 157.

somewhat, they might think, like those from the living to the dead. At length, 'the martyr of unavailing regret,' as Dr. Drake calls him, was released. He died on the 21st of September, 1729.

> 'And fixed on Cambria's solitary shore,
> Gave to St. David one true Briton more.'

One source of his poignant remorse was his neglect of a wife whom he passionately loved. In this respect Steele's every-day conduct reminds one of Sheridan's: each idolized the ill-starred being united to him; Mrs. Sheridan was one of those angelic beings, no sooner seen than beloved: a deeply injured, patient sufferer. Lady Steele was a woman of sense and of spirit, respected as well as adored by Steele; she drew the rein tight, but the effort made with heroism—and how much of heroism has not every woman's life cause to display, —was too much for her; it broke her heart. Steele, perhaps intentionally, misconstrued her character when he accused her of being fond of money. She had given him her all: a competent fortune, and without a settlement; and her wish was to be prudent, honest, independent. No woman who so acts need fear the reproach of penuriousness. Steele, in 1720, wrote, referring to her, these words:—'The best woman that ever man had, cannot now lament and pine at his neglect of himself.' An expressive, a most expressive allusion.

No one has written more sensibly than Steele on the hideous misery of debt.

'I am astonished,' he says, in the Spectator, 'that men can be so insensible to the danger of running into debt. One would think it impossible, a man who is given to contract debts should not know that his creditor has, from that moment in which he transgresses payment, so much as that demand comes to, in his debtor's honour, liberty, life, fortune. One would think he did not know that his creditor can say

the worst thing imaginable of him, to wit, "that he is unjust," without defamation, and even seize his person, without being guilty of an assault. Yet such is the loose and abandoned turn of some men's minds, that they can live under these constant apprehensions, and *still go on* to increase the cause of them.'

Poor Steele! One cannot forbear smiling at the virtuous indignation with which he so closely describes his own state —a state so completely of his own creating, since fortune did him, in spite of himself, many a good turn.

'The debtor,' he gravely continues, 'is the creditor's criminal, and all the officers of power and state whom we behold make so great a figure, are no other than so many persons in authority to make good his charge against him. Human society depends upon his having the vengeance law allots him; and the debtor owes his liberty to his neighbour, as much as the murderer does his life to his prince.'* Alas! few persons understood the subject better than Steele. No prosperity could keep him in affluence: his expenses, owing to his utter want of calculation, were always far greater than his income.

Steele owed his wife a great debt of obligation in another way. One afternoon, soon after his marriage, he asked her if she would accompany him in a visit he proposed to pay. She consented, and they drove to a house in the environs of London. Here they alighted; it was a boarding school, and Steele conducted his young wife into the sitting room. Presently a young lady made her appearance, and Steele received her with great fondness, insomuch that his wife asked him 'if the child was his?' On his acknowledging that she was, 'Then,' said the lady, 'I beg she may be mine too.' The young girl was taken to Steele's home, and treated with the greatest kindness; but when, in course of time, another daughter, named, like this one, Elizabeth, was growing up, jealousies arose in the strangely composed family, and marriage seemed the only

* 'Spectator,' No. 82.

refuge by which Miss Ousley, as the illegitimate daughter was called, could escape from a home no longer happy.

She, however, nearly encountered a worse destiny. Amongst those whom Steele befriended, was Richard Savage; 'the inhumanity of his mother,' Steele said, 'ought to make every good man his friend.' Whilst Steele was rearing *his* illegitimate child with tenderness, Lady Macclesfield was pursuing hers unto the death. The generous heart of Steele was deeply touched by the fate of Savage. He allowed him an annual stipend, endeavoured to fix him in some respectable way of living, and resolved to give him his daughter as a wife, with a portion of a thousand pounds. Being, however, unable to raise this money, the union was deferred from day to day, and meantime Savage amused himself and his friends by satirizing his benefactor. Fortunately for poor Elizabeth Steele, her father heard of these remarks, and instantly banished Savage for ever from his house. The project of marrying his daughter to such a man, shows at once the thoughtless good nature and too easy confidence of Steele. Poor Elizabeth, or, as she was styled, Mistress Ousley, married a worthy man—a Mr. Ayrnston, who was concerned in a glove manufactory near Hereford. She began her married life, as Mrs. Malaprop recommends, 'with a little aversion,' which she seems never to have overcome. Her legitimate sister married the Hon. John Trevor, son of Baron Trevor. In after-life she evinced much kindness and affection for her half-sister, and after Mr. Ayrnston's death, took that lady's only daughter to live with her constantly.

Various anecdotes are told of Steele's extravagance in running up bills, and total indifference to what is genteelly called 'settling an account.' For instance, he owed (we dare not say *paid*) fifty pounds annually to his barber: for this fine gentleman who looks so like a slattern in his portrait, in his night cap and morning gown, must needs have a full-bottomed black wig in full curl every time he goes an airing

—and that 'elegant article,' as no doubt the hairdresser called it, generally cost fifty pounds. Then Sir Richard must also have an elegant theatre built in his house, for the recitation of favourite authors. It was nearly completed, when one day he told the carpenter to mount up into a pulpit at the end of the building, and to deliver a few sentences. The man did as he was told; but could not find any thing to say. 'Just say,' cried Sir Richard, who wanted to see if the speaker could be well heard from the other end of the theatre, 'whatever comes first into your head.' Then the carpenter began: he stared steadfastly at Steele, and then, in a voice of thunder, thus spoke: 'Sir Richard Steele, here has I, and these here men been doing your work for these three months, and never seen the colour of your money. When do you mean to pay us? I cannot pay my men without money, and money I must have.' Sir Richard answered that he greatly admired the eloquence of his carpenter, but by no means admired the subject.

Steele, Savage, and Phillips, were sallying forth one night from a tavern in Gerard Street, Soho, after having supped together in high spirits. At the top of Hedge Lane, they were met by a tradesman who, after begging their pardon, said that he had observed, at the top of the lane, several suspicious-looking fellows, like bailiffs, lurking about. He warned them, therefore, if they were apprehensive of danger, to take a different route. Not one of the trio dared to wait to thank the man; each darted off, taking different ways, and conscious of his own circumstances and dangers.

What a life such men lead! Sometimes we find Steele retiring to an obscure tavern, and writing all day, assisted by Savage—and unable to pay for dinner until the pamphlet thus scratched off was sold and paid for; sometimes giving a grand dinner, in grand style, persons of quality around the table, waited upon by a host of liveried servants—sheriffs' officers in disguise; yet still Steele was as gay, as lavish,

and as unreflecting as ever, until death had not only carried off his wife to whom he could henceforth give only the poor tribute of his tears, but had also given him a very sensible warning of his approach to himself. It appears wonderful that in this life of hurry, peril, and dissipation any man could write as Steele wrote. It is true that he did little to purify and correct our language—a credit due to Swift. Steele, indeed, repudiated the idea of so doing, in the 'Tatler,' which he professed to write in the tone of common conversation. He kept to this rule, and, indeed, exceeded it so far as sometimes to degenerate into bad grammar and involved construction. Careless, as in general his style was, there is a charm in it; and, where his feelings were aroused, great spirit, and almost eloquence. The following passage, which is intended to contrast the virtuous and the vicious of the female sex, has often been given as a specimen of Steele's best style.

'The ill,' he says, 'are employed in communicating scandal, infamy, and disease, like furies: the good distribute benevolence, friendship, and health, like angels. The ill are damped with pain and anguish at the sight of all that is laudable, lovely, or happy: the virtuous are touched with commiseration towards the guilty, the disagreeable, and the wretched. There are those who have abandoned the very memory, not only of innocence, but of shame. There are those who never forgave, nor could ever bear being forgiven. There are those also who visit the beds of the sick, lull the cares of the sorrowful, and double the joys of the joyful. Such is the destroying fiend, such the guardian angel, woman.'

Many as are the obligations we owe to Steele, the improvement of our language cannot, as we have stated, be mentioned as among them. Nevertheless he was, by some of his qualities, eminently calculated to delight his readers. In the first place, he possessed those susceptible feelings, without which 'gifts of heaven,' as Dr. Drake calls them, there can be no comprehension of what is grand and

beautiful, no quick sense of what is affecting, noble, and honourable.

Distinguished by these traits, it was a far easier task for Steele to sketch off, with a masterly hand, characters; and to paint scenes of pathos or of humour, than to enter upon discussions which required study, research, and long previous cultivation. He has, therefore, suffered by an inevitable comparison with Addison. Yet Steele has left passages of narrative, and bursts of feeling, which Addison never equalled.

That he perfectly understood the unadulterated language of feeling, is shown in the following sentences, so full of truth and beauty.

'The strings of the heart,' he says, 'which are to be touched to give us compassion, are not so played on but by the finest hand. We see in tragical representations; it is not the pomp of language, nor the magnificence of dress, in which the passion is wrought, that touches sensible spirits; but something of a plain and simple nature, which breaks in upon our souls, by that sympathy, which is given us for our mutual goodwill and service.'

It is, indeed, a mournful truth, that Steele's imperfect education, cut short by his too early entrance into life; his dissipated habits, and consequent want of time for reflection, or research; and his rushing into politics, have rendered his Essays, on the whole, inferior to that point of excellence which they might have attained under the blessings of a calm, safe, and self-restrained existence.

Almost every shade of female character may be found in the writings of Steele. And let it not be forgotten that the rough sketch of the inimitable Sir Roger de Coverley must be ascribed not to Addison but to him; for the filling up of the outline, the lovers of humour are indebted to Addison. This famous character is supposed to have been drawn from life; and Sir John Pakington of Worcestershire, an old-fashioned Tory, is supposed to have been the original. But the whole

was, it appears, the invention chiefly of Addison and Steele, with one unpleasant paper by Tickell.

Steele, in his writings, was the stanch friend of virtue and decorum. His own and successive generations owe him much for his endeavours 'to ameliorate the condition of society, to ridicule folly and abash vice.'

CHAPTER VI.

ADDISON; BILTON HIS RESIDENCE.— DESCRIPTION OF IT.— ADDISON'S DAUGHTER, CHARLOTTE; HER DEFICIENCIES.—ADDISON'S LIFE AND ITS ERRORS.—THE FACILITY WITH WHICH HE PENNED HIS ESSAYS.—HIS STRICTURES ON WOMEN.— AFRA BEHN; HER IMMORALITY, HER PLAYS, AND HER LETTERS.— ADDISON'S ANSWER TO A LADY'S ADVANCES.— HIS MERITS AS A WRITER.— HIS REFINED TASTE AND LOVE OF NATURE.— DR. JOHNSON'S OPINION OF ADDISON.

CHAPTER VI.

E lovers of Addison's memory might, until about the be-
ning of the present century, have been gratified by
owing that his name was still heard as the proprietor of
village of Bilton, near Rugby. On quitting that scho-
tic town, you pass over a modern bridge composed of
ee circular arches, by which the river Avon is spanned.
you proceed, the river is still in view, winding along a
h valley until you reach the village of Newbold; here
utiful prospects, extending over the cultured fields and
ods, and substantial farmsteads, for which Warwickshire is
ed, arrest the attention. In the distance is the spire of
ton church; the house in which Addison lived is about
f a mile from the river Avon.

In Ireland's time, the house, gabled at one end, and stand-
in a woody park, was just in the same state as when
dison possessed it. There had been exteriorly no change;
thin, there was the furniture which he used, the three
intings of himself at various eras of his life; that of his
end, Secretary Craggs; and some pictures by Vandyck and
ner masters, which he had purchased. The servant could
xt point out to you Addison's Walk; it is a beautiful alley
med by Spanish chestnuts and by oaks, running in a straight
e. Here the great essayist—for in nothing else was he
eat—used to spend his morning, enjoying the unbroken

walk so convenient for contemplation, and so greatly resembling the walks in Magdalen Garden, Oxford, which still bear his name. Then the Spanish oaks had a tender claim upon the memory of this man of reserved nature. One of the friends he most loved was Craggs (descended, according to the Duchess of Marlborough, from a footman), and Craggs had brought him from Spain the acorns where those oaks grew; and the oaks were new in the country.

Then pass we into a hermitage in this walk, embellished with an inscription of verses à la Addison—if not Addison's; as his, however, they were read with respect by Ireland, who, when he was at Bilton, was permitted to see the aged daughter of the Countess of Warwick and of Addison, born only a year before her father's death, too soon to be to him the companion, the solace and stay in life which he wanted. To her, Bilton, for which Addison, in conjunction with his brother, Gulstone Addison, had paid ten thousand pounds, had descended.

A tradition long existed that Addison had left a large trunk full of manuscripts to his daughter, not to be opened until after her death. Subsequently, however, to that event, no such papers were ever forthcoming.

At Bilton, Addison had at length leisure to reflect on a life more useful than happy. Nature had, it is true, endowed this good man with a sweet, patient, equable temper: but, like most reserved men, when he did suffer it was inwardly, and the effects of some disappointments show themselves in pernicious habits which are the doom of happiness.

We can, however, easily imagine what Addison was to the friends whom he loved to assemble in the depths of the country, as Bilton was then considered.

'He was,' says Sir Richard Steele (in his dedication of Addison's play of the 'Drummer') 'above all men in that talent called humour, and enjoyed it in such perfection, that I have often reflected after a night spent with him apart

from all the world, that I had had the pleasure of conversing with an intimate acquaintance of Terence and Catullus, who had all their wit and nature, heightened with humour more exquisite and delightful than any other man ever possessed.'

Chequered, indeed, had Addison's career proved; yet, on the whole, his reflections, as he paced up and down the Spanish oak and chestnut avenue, must have led to the conclusion that the son of a clergyman of moderate means, rising to be Secretary of State, had not done ill in his generation.

Then what wonderful success as a dramatist had he not to recall; and it was, perhaps, the most exulting of all triumphs in those days when the stage was almost as influential in politics as the House of Commons; and Addison might remember how the Queen had commanded him to dedicate the play to *her*, but that he dared not do it because the Duchess of Marlborough, Queen Sarah, had allowed him to dedicate it to her. Yet 'Cato' is but a fine dialogue on liberty; as a tragedy it wants character, action, and passion; even Pope reluctantly wrote to Sir William Turnbull that in poetical affairs he was himself obliged to turn admirer instead of practitioner —a confession strange for Pope to make. 'Cato,' he adds, 'was not so much the wonder of Rome in his days, as he is of Britain in ours; and though all the foolish industry possible has been used to make it thought a party play, yet, what the author once said of another, may the most properly in the world be applied to him on this occasion—

> 'Envy itself is dumb, in wonder lost,
> And factions strive who shall applaud him most.'

Then came to Addison that review of one's life which every one makes from time to time. The remembrance of the wasp Dennis, the chief hero of the Dunciad, must have been revived with the gratifying recollection that, whilst Pope and

Swift had answered and attacked the malignant critic, he had wisely left his assaults unnoticed. 'If insulted genius had not noticed Dennis, Dennis in vain would have insulted genius.' *

Next might crowd into the retirement of Bilton, images of those from whom adverse events had severed Joseph Addison; of Steele, first and foremost. There came back pleasant days when they had talked over the plan of the 'Spectator' with Tickell; when Addison had announced his intention of marking his papers with the capital letters C. L. I. O. (Steele having formerly marked his in the 'Tatler' with a hand); and when they had worked out together that incomparable plan which has left us, after all that has since been done, the most delightful collection of essays and miscellaneous papers in our language. And Thomas Tickell's image would rise before him—Tickell 'of Queen's,' as Addison was wont to call him, when they were both Oxonians—Tickell, at whose door rests, and *not* at Steele's, the odious attempt to make Sir Roger de Coverley immoral, and on account of whose disgusting suggestion, Addison, it is asserted, cut down the character and shortened the good knight's career of fiction, by announcing his death. These, and visions of still earlier days, when Henry Sacheverell (*not* the red-hot divine) was his friend, came doubtless into the memory of one whose very inmost feelings were hidden from every human being. In truth, he was, no doubt, unreserved to one friend, and, perhaps, to one alone. But romance had long since died away in the heart of Addison. Red tapeism, indeed, secretary and placeman as he was, could scarcely contract a spirit so free, a heart so large as his; nor did those Whig principles wear in him, as they did in others, the semblance of adulation. Still Addison was not the Addison of Magdalen College, nor of the club; sick at heart, perhaps of faction—mortified, may be, at the failure of his 'Whig Ex-

* D'Israeli's Miscellanies.

ıminer,' set up in opposition to Swift's 'Examiner,' perchance he burden of that Tory song then in vogue, ran in his head ometimes—

> 'And he that will this health deny
> Down among the dead men let him lie;'—

ith Swift's exulting sneer when he heard that the 'Whig xaminer' had only run five numbers, 'Then it is now own among the dead men.' Perhaps the remembrance of is infelicitous marriage, might haunt the man who had in arly life known a true affection, and that for the sister of his ear friend Sacheverell; and the conviction that he had, in his ver-prudence, committed an error, came to him, as it has done) many men who have been too *wise* in their youth, and who ay for it in an old age of solitude; and he might turn to his hild, Charlotte, the little heiress of his property, for consola-ion. But she was too young, and, happily, was a year old only hen he died. Happily, we say, for with one of those extra-rdinary memories which show that there is some portion of ca-acity in the brain left untouched, at times her understanding as clouded; though she was not, as has been said, a perfect mbecile. She could go on with any part of her father's works, nd even repeat many passages of the whole: that she was incapable of speaking or writing an intelligible sentence,'* as also been stated; it was untrue; she was very deaf, but er understanding was by no means so weak as has been sserted. She died in 1797, and her father's library at Bilton as sent to town for sale, as well as his medals and jewels. he estate of Bilton was bequeathed by Miss Addison to the hird son of Lord Bradford.

It would seem almost presumptuous to offer remarks on he 'Spectator,' a work with which every one is familiar, and hich almost every mind is constituted to enjoy. One may magine what its daily appearance must have produced at a

* 'Gentleman's Magazine,' March 1797.

time, when recently, a paper once a week, containing the mere skeleton of current news, used to be read aloud in country coffee-houses, without any prospect of a copy even being otherwise circulated, and was the sole literary gratification of a large portion of society.

The previous fame of the writers may have given the 'Spectator' a peculiar interest in the minds of many persons. Steele's eccentric, and Addison's retiring character, both stimulated public curiosity. Tickell was a sort of foil to these two friends. Various reports reached the world of Addison's extreme reserve. The 'most timorous and awkward man I ever saw,' cries Lord Chesterfield; 'A parson in a tye wig,' exclaims Dr. Mandeville, author of the 'Fable of the Bees.' But neither of these men were of such characters as to draw forth the bright jewels from the casket of Addison's heart;—Addison confessed, indeed, that 'whilst he had mental riches to the value of a thousand pounds, he had not a guinea in his pocket,' yet in the Kit-Kat Club how ready was his impromptu when the company called for a toast for Lady Manchester; how elegant the compliment:—

> 'When haughty Gallia's dames, that spread
> O'er their pale cheeks an artful red,
> Beheld this beauteous stranger there,
> In native charms divinely fair;
> Confusion in their looks they show'd,
> And with unborrowed blushes glow'd.'

Pope, indeed, declares that Addison's conversation was more delightful than that of any man he had ever known. And Pope had known the highest order of intellects, set out under the auspices of the finest school of manners,—that old school, which we only meet now in the aristocratic circles of England, or among the *haute noblesse* of France.

Addison's Essays were written with great rapidity. He used to make his plan in his own head, then walk about a room, 'and dictate it into language,' Steele tells us, 'with

as much ease as any one could write it down;' yet he could not, in the House of Commons, utter a word. Before publication he would alter his works, to please friends, afterwards he never retouched a syllable, even when most solicited to do so. Two circumstances in Addison's life augmented that predilection for stimulants which shortened his days. One was, his union with a woman who knew not how to value him. Another, his position as Secretary of State on the accession of George the First. The old tavern of Don Saltero is the spot to which tradition points as the refuge of Addison from domestic discomfort and his turning to Canary wine and Barbadoes water. The office where he worked officially, was the scene not of his midnight labours, but of his solitary musing, where he thought—and drank.

It is, indeed, mournful to add his name to that of the many great and good men who have been the wretched victims of this one, next to incurable vice,—the scourge of England.

What do not women owe to Addison? For he gently rebuked their faults, satirized their follies, and admonished them as to the shoals in life where perils lay; he perfectly comprehended their characteristics; that silent man, whose thoughts were closely guarded, like prisoners in a dungeon, knew every emotion that prompted Flavia to flirt, or Lucilla to withdraw. What monitions has he not left in the Essay on 'Cheerfulness and Mirth!' What every day Christianity appears throughout all his papers! what lofty thoughts in those of the Saturday!—Theology, if not of the schools, yet of the Scriptures, written from the heart, and addressed to the heart.

The ladies of that period, had, it is true, few of the advantages enjoyed by those of the nineteenth century. The literature of their own sex was far from being adapted to elevate their minds. We should put aside the comedies of Susannah Centlivre (who died in 1723) as belonging to the subject of the drama,—even if they were not full of gross indelicacies; but

when we turn to the popular works of Mrs. Aphara, or Afra, Behn, we find everything in them that women of a good stamp would, in our own day, avoid; everything that could tend to foster the worst enemies of virtue and decorum.

Afra Behn, born as she was in the reign of Charles the First, belonged much more properly to the age of Charles the Second. She died toward the close of the seventeenth century (in 1689) and must, therefore, have lived in three reigns, and through the Protectorate. Her life, from the first, was a romance, and it reminds one, somewhat, of that of Mrs. Inchbald, but without the respectability of that excellent woman's career. Of a good family, Afra was born in Canterbury; her father's name was Johnson, and being related to Lord Willoughby, he was appointed Lieutenant-General of Surinam. He was on his voyage when he died; but his family proceeded to Surinam, of which Mrs. Behn has left a glowing description in her romance, 'Oroonoko.' That chieftain became the most intimate friend, and, it was said, more than a friend, of Aphara. He, and Imoinda, his wife, were seldom, she relates herself, 'an hour a day from her lodgings; they ate with her, and she obliged them in all things she was capable, entertaining them with the lives of the Romans, and great men, which charmed *him* to that company, and *her*, with teaching her all the pretty works she was mistress of, and telling her stories of nuns, and endeavouring to bring her to the knowledge of the true God.'*

Afra returned to England, and married Mr. Behn, a Dutch merchant. She gave the first information of the scheme formed by the Dutch of sailing up the Thames, and burning the English ships in their harbours; but her information was disregarded, and she turned to the gaieties and gallantries of Antwerp, where she was then residing, for diversion. Her

* This intimacy was the origin of some scandal, which the authoress of Mrs. Behn's Memoirs indignantly repudiates; both on the plea of her friend's innocence of mind and on that of Oroonoko's love for his own Imoinda.

account of her conquests, in her letters, may have amused the correspondents of these days; but, from a married woman, would be very much disapproved of, in ours. Of the seventeen comedies which she produced, not one, we presume, would not be hissed off the stage in our time, and of her 'Miscellany Poems,' as she styles them, the greater portion were songs written by Lord Rochester, Etherege, and Henry Crisp; so that their tendency may easily be imagined. Her plays, one of which is dedicated to Nell Gwynne, were acted at the 'King's,' and at the 'Duke's' Theatre, and are worthy both of the patrons who permitted them to appear, and of the audience who witnessed them.

Southerne founded his celebrated play, 'Oroonoko,' on the 'History of Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave,' by Mrs. Behn. In his dedication to her of his play, Southerne writes, 'She had a great command of the stage, and I often wondered that she would bury her favourite hero in a novel, where she might have revived him in a *scene*. She thought either that no actor could represent him, or she could not bear him represented; and I believe the last, when I remember what I have heard from a friend of hers, that she always told his history more feelingly than she writ it.'

Mrs. Behn found time to translate verses both from the Latin of Ovid, and the French of Fontenelle; and she was the centre of a circle of wits and poets, some friends, some lovers; one, indeed, she christened Lycodus, and with him she had a long correspondence, wholly unworthy of any modest woman. She was, nevertheless, buried in the cloisters in Westminster Abbey, and Charles Cotton, author of 'Virgil Travesty,' complimented her in the following lines* :—

'Some hands write some things well, are elsewhere lame
But on all themes your power is the same.
Of buskin and of sock you know the pace,
And tread in both with equal skill and grace;

But, when you write of love, Astræa, then,
Love dips his arrows where you wet your pen,
Such charming lines did never paper grace,
Soft as your sex, and smooth as beauty's face.'

Such was the mental food of women previous to the commencement of periodical literature; now and then a star appeared, generally faintly, as in the instance of Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, whose unread works fill, Walpole tells us, many folios. Her 'World's Olio:' her 'Nature's Picture drawn by Fancy's Pencil to the life,' were far less popular than Afra Behn's improper letters; her Grace's plays are forgotten, and her 'Philosophical and Physical Opinions' exploded; her 'Poems and Phancies;' her 'Sociable Letters;' who ever read them? *Prestige* might do much for this 'fertile pedant,' as Walpole calls her; but the young ladies still preferred Mistress Behn's improper plays with their improper titles to her Grace's unnatural tragedy, in which a whole scene written against Camden's 'Britannia' is introduced. 'She thought, I suppose,' says Walpole, 'that a geographic satire in the middle of a play was mixing the *utile* with the *dolce*.' She obtained a place in Ballard's 'Learned Ladies,' and there let us leave her.

Addison's famous tirade against the collectors of old china is in everybody's mind. Women, he declares, when weary of amours, in which their youth was passed, were visited with that second fancy, which took possession of them for life. 'China vessels are playthings for women of all ages. An old lady of fourscore shall be as busy in cleaning an Indian mandarin, as her great-granddaughter is in dressing her baby.'

The common way of gratifying this passion, was the exchange of old clothes for this brittle commodity.

'I have known,' says he, 'an old petticoat metamorphosed into a punch-bowl, and a pair of breeches into a teapot. For this reason, my friend Tradewell in the city calls his great

room that is nobly furnished out with china, his wife's wardrobe. In yonder corner,' (says he,) 'are above twenty suits of clothes, and on that scrutoire above one hundred yards of furbelowed silk. You cannot imagine how many nightgowns, stays, and mantuas, went to the raising of that pyramid. The worst of it is, says he, a suit of clothes is not suffered to last half its time, that it may be the more vendible; so that in reality this is but a more dexterous way of picking the husband's pocket; who is often purchasing a neat vase of china, when he fancies that he is buying a fine head, or a silk gown for his wife.'

But, after thus trifling, Addison, following his usual method comes to the 'vital mischief of the thing.' The female passion for china administers to the fair possessor great matter for wrath and sorrow. Luxury, also, covetousness, and ostentation are engendered by gratifying their fancies with the purchase, at any sacrifice, of so brittle a possession. 'For this reason, I have often wondered,' he adds, 'that our ladies have not taken pleasure in egg-shells.'

Instances far more comprehensive and striking of the high morality deduced from trifling and every-day facts and incidents in the 'Spectator' are innumerable. His own life bore out, except in one fatal particular, his admirable teaching: yet he had temptations. While in the full blaze of success and popularity, and after the rupture of an early engagement with the sister of Henry Sacheverell, Addison met with a lady with whom he fell passionately and honourably in love. She became—unconscious of his attachment—the wife of his dearest friend and patron. Some years afterwards she gave Addison an intimation of a stronger sentiment for him than propriety warranted, and offered him an interview. His letter in reply is a masterpiece of honour, delicacy, and sincerity. It was no ordinary task to write that letter, for Addison had loved the tempter, how truly the concluding passage in this letter will manifest.

'I too, madam, am far from being insensible. I, too, have passions; and would my situation, a few years ago, have allowed me a possibility of succeeding, I should legally have solicited that happiness which you are now ready to bestow. I had the honour of supping at Mr. D.'s, where I first saw you; and I shall make no scruple in declaring that I never saw a person so irresistibly beautiful, nor a manner so excessively engaging; but the superiority of your circumstances prevented any declaration on my side, although I burnt with a flame as strong as ever fired the human breast. I laboured to conceal it. Time and absence at length abated a hopeless passion, and your marriage with my patron effectually cured it. Do not, madam, endeavour to rekindle that flame; do not destroy a tranquillity I have just begun to taste, and blast your own honour, which has been hitherto unsullied. My best esteem is yours, but should I promise more, consider the fatal necessity I should be under of removing myself from an intercourse so dangerous. In any other commands dispose of, madam, your humble servant.'

The first edition of Addison's complete works was produced under the care of Tickell, whom he loved with the affection of a father,—and it was dedicated to Secretary Craggs. They were published in 1721, with an address by Tickell to the Earl of Warwick. By that time both Craggs and Lord Warwick were in the grave. 'Addison's works,' wrote Bishop Atterbury, 'came to my hands yesterday, October 15th, 1721. I cannot but think it a very odd set of incidents, that the book should be dedicated by a dead man to a dead man (Mr. Craggs), and even that the new patron (Lord Warwick), to whom Tickell chose to inscribe his verses, should be dead also before they were published. Had I been in the editor's place, I should have been a little apprehensive for myself, under a thought that every one who had any hand in that work was to die before the publication of it.'

Tickell's address has been often quoted and admired. To

us, with the exception of one or two passages, such as the following, it seems stilted and artificial :—

> 'Can I forget the dismal night that gave
> My soul's best part for ever to the grave!
> How silent did his old companions tread,
> By midnight lamps, the mansions of the dead;
> Through breathing statues, then unheeded things,
> Through rows of warriors, and through walks of kings!
> What awe did the slow solemn knell inspire,
> The pealing organ and the pausing choir!
> The duties by the lawn-robed prelate paid,
> And the last words, that dust to dust convey'd!
> While speechless o'er thy closing grave we bend,
> Accept these tears, thou dear departed friend!
> Oh gone for ever! take this long adieu,
> And sleep in peace with thy own Montague.'

The English language, which had been improving from the time of Sir Philip Sidney, acquired in Addison's writing, classical elegance and purity. Addison was desirous of preserving the idiom of our ancient writers, and of emulating the colour and flavour of the best authors of our first period of English letters, Hooker, Bacon, and Ralegh. In the second era, Cowley, Tillotson, and Temple were his prototypes. As a critic he followed the injunctions of Ben Jonson in that masterly posthumous work the 'Discoveries:' 'For a man to write well there are required three necessaries: to read the best authors, observe the best speakers, and much exercise of his own style.'

Addison's first efforts in the 'Spectator' were to correct public taste, which had degenerated during the age of Charles the Second. His Essays on Tragedy and True and False Wit were written for this end. The same refined taste marked him in respect to the sister arts of painting, architecture, and gardening. Bacon has declared that gardening is the most decisive proof of civilization. Addison introduced to his age the exquisite scenery of Milton, and took every opportunity of pointing out the charms of nature to his readers. At a time

when stiff hedgerows and blank terraces were the approved style, he describes 'the natural style of gardening' with his wonted simplicity and beauty; paints the clear fountain's wandering rill, passing through banks of violets and primroses, plats of willow and other plants, that seem to be of its own producing; and then teaches us to listen to the concert to which he has given a general invitation to every feathered songster in the neighbourhood. Nor does he ever suffer their nests to be destroyed even in spring. 'I value my garden more for being full of blackbirds than cherries, and very frankly give them fruit for their songs.'

By his successful efforts, added to the endeavours of other writers, England has been rendered the 'Paradise of Europe.'

To sum up his merits, no words can better express those which relate to style and manner than the praise of Johnson: 'Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.' As a critic we ought ever to cherish his memory. Independently of the tone he gave to periodical literature, we owe to him the appreciation of 'Paradise Lost,' in despite of the prevalent indifference of the world to that work. 'The old blind schoolmaster,' wrote Edmund Waller, in one of his letters, 'hath published a tedious poem on the Fall of Man. If its length be not considered as merit it hath no other.'

It was reserved, as fate would have it, for Addison to make the insensible and the prejudiced aware that one passage written by 'the old blind schoolmaster' was worth a thousand-fold all that Waller ever composed.

CHAPTER VII.

DANIEL DEFOE. — ANECDOTE OF HARLEY'S PATRONAGE. — DEFOE IN PRISON. — HE VISITS SCOTLAND. — 'HISTORY OF THE GREAT PLAGUE.' — DIES IN CRIPPLEGATE IN 1731. — JONATHAN SWIFT; HIS BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EDUCATION. — BECOMES AMANUENSIS TO SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE. — SWIFT'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE. — HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH STELLA. — MAKES A CAPITAL COUNTRY CLERGYMAN. — GETS INTRODUCED TO 'ADDISON'S LITTLE SENATE.' — 'TALE OF A TUB.' — DR. SOUTH'S BALLAD OF THE SAILOR AND THE SOLDIER. — ESTHER VANHOMRIGH; SWIFT'S TREATMENT OF HER. — HIS PRIVATE MARRIAGE WITH STELLA. — HER MELANCHOLY END.

CHAPTER VII.

IT was about the end of the year 1704 that a message came to a poor forgotten wretch, who lay, hopeless and ruined, in Newgate, to ask, 'What could the Secretary of State do for him?' The minister who asked that question was Robert Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford; the man who answered it was Daniel Defoe.

Happily for Defoe, statesmen were literary in those times. Harley, indeed, wrote little, and what he did produce were dull essays,—the one on 'Public Credit,' the other on 'Loans;' but he mixed intimately with literary men. One of the ablest was, he judged, not to be caged, and starved, and heart-stricken for ever; so he sent to that den of misery, and then went, full of a sad tale of distress, to stolid Queen Anne.

Let us here interpose a reflection. It is good for ministers to have near them, if they have it not, as Harley had it, *in* themselves, some person *au courant* to the literature of the century. When the late Miss Jane Porter applied to the late Sir Robert Peel for a pension, he coldly refused it; yet there never was a kinder heart than his to merit *in pauperis*. Witness numerous instances. He had never, it seems, heard of 'Thaddeus of Warsaw,' that touching tale; never of 'Wallace,' which, Scott owned, suggested to him his historical romance; and so that gentle, once lovely, elegant, and talented being died—dependent.

Harley, however, knew better; or, if he did not, there were many around him who had known poor Daniel's hapless circumstances. How, the son of a butcher, in St. Giles's,—(what can well be more anti-sympathetic?)—he had made the most of a four years' education at Newington Green Dissenting Academy; how he had forsworn the blue apron and the cleaver, and been put to some trade, which he would not name; but never, he indignantly declared, was he either an hosier, or an apprentice. Whatever he was,—Harley knew well that he had long been getting poorer and poorer, absconding from his creditors, then looking up again and making tiles near Tilbury; and though it was said, he did not want, like the Egyptians, to make bricks without straw, he certainly, like the Jews, required bricks without paying the labourers. He was, in fact, a projector: what can one say worse of a man without capital? Projects for banks, projects for factories, projects for inquiries into bankruptcies (written, no doubt, *con amore*), all failed, all;—yet he wrote an Essay on Projects. This Murad the Unlucky was, at last, appointed Accountant to Commissioners for managing Duties on Glass: no sooner was he in employ, than the tax was repealed, and in 1699, Daniel was truly a gentleman in difficulties.

He rose again, and wrote 'The True-born Englishman,' which, strange to say, was in compliment to King William. That monarch admitted him into his presence. Had it been any one else, good fortune would have ensued: but just as adversity was taking her leave of Defoe, William died.

In an evil hour, poor man! Defoe reprinted his 'Shortest Way with the Dissenters.' It was considered a libel on the House of Commons, and ordered to be burnt by the common hangman, in New Palace Yard.

A reward of 50*l.* was offered for his apprehension, and a proclamation by the Secretaries of State, dated 1703, January, thus describes him:—

'He is a middle-sized, spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion and dark-brown coloured hair, but wears a wig, a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth; was born in London, and, for many years, was a hose-factor in Freeman's Yard, in Cornhill, and is now owner of the brick and pantile works near Tilbury Fort in Essex.'

He was caught and caged, and, it is terrible to reflect, pilloried. Then he lay long in that stifling captivity—that wretched Newgate; yet his strong, manly, bold spirit soared, and he composed—its flight was not very dignified—his 'Ode to the Pillory,' and his 'Hymn to the Gallows.' In the former these lines show a manly courage that is very touching, when we consider for how venial a fault Defoe suffered the shame and the scoff:—

'Hail! H'iroglypick State Machine,
Condemned to punish fancy in;
Men, that *are* men, can in thee feel no pain,
And all thy insignificance disdain.
Contempt, that false new word for shame,
Is without crime an empty name,
A shadow to amuse mankind,
But never frights the wise or well-fix'd mind.
Virtue despises human scorn,
And scandals innocence adorn.'

It was during his imprisonment that he wrote 'The Review,' and published 'The Storm:' which was not merely a dry detail of casualties, in the course of which the leaden roofs of churches were rolled up like parchments; the navy almost wholly shattered, and fifteen hundred seamen lost; but, says Mr. John Ballantine in his 'Fragments on Defoe,' an occasion was taken by Defoe to 'inculcate the truth of religion and the superintendency of Providence.'

And now see Harley, bare-headed, before the Queen, supplicating Defoe's release. She did not give it readily. If there was a being whom Anne could hate with fervour, it was her late brother-in-law, King William. She stood out some time,

firm, and sullen; but, at last, consented. The prisoner was sent, therefore, once more into society; he retreated to Bury St. Edmunds. Matters seem to have taken a turn. Godolphin found him out, and sent him to Scotland, and Defoe wrote his 'History of the Union,' and had, it is said, a pension from Queen Anne. But fate here again interposed: again was Defoe indicted, convicted, fined, and sent to his old quarters in Newgate. Nine years before he had planned his 'Review' in that very prison: he now, in 1713, resolved to abandon that publication.

He was released—but Queen Anne died the year afterwards. And now, attacked on all sides, everything that he wrote was regarded with suspicion. At length he began a defence of his political conduct; he called it 'An Appeal to Honour and Justice, though it be of his worst Enemies; being a true Account of his Conduct in Public Affairs.'

As he proceeded to review his miserable life, the spirits which had hitherto sustained Defoe, sank. He had heretofore been thought by his foes to be made of iron: but his mind and body both gave way. As he drew near the completion of that powerful narrative of his sufferings, a stroke of apoplexy arrested his hand. He recovered, finished his 'Appeal,' and lived on the profits of the sale for some time.

But the character of the energetic, though crushed, powers of the man was changed. He turned to lighter and safer themes; and the discovery of Alexander Selkirk being then a topic of general interest, he produced his 'Robinson Crusoe:' a work the fame of which will last as long as the language in which it is written. It is a work in which the ways of Providence are simply and pleasingly vindicated, and a lasting and useful moral is conveyed through the channel of an interesting and delightful story. For youth it is excellent, as showing to boys, the power of overcoming obstacles; and to all, both old and young, as marking the peculiar Providence which watches

to help those who will do their best to help themselves. Another delightful work of Defoe's is his 'Memoirs of a Cavalier.' Though almost wholly founded on fiction, it possesses such power of delineation, such a thorough mastery over the attention, that few persons can read it without the belief that it is a true history of some real personage. For accounts of national convulsions, of war, of the tempest, or the pestilence, Defoe is unrivalled. Born immediately after the Restoration, Defoe, no doubt, knew many an old soldier, and listened to many a battle fought over again. 'He must have lived among them at that age,' says Sir Walter Scott, 'when boys, such as we conceive Defoe must necessarily have been, cling to the knees of those who can tell them of the darings and the dangers of their youth, at a period when their own passions, and views of pressing forward in life, have not begun to operate on their minds, and while they are still pleased to listen to the adventures which others have encountered on that stage which they themselves have not yet entered upon.'

The 'History of the Great Plague' is also a class of composition between romance and history. Full as it is of hideous details, it displays so much genius that Defoe might have been immortalized for this, and for the 'Memoirs of a Cavalier,' had he not written 'Robinson Crusoe.' His 'Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions,' published under a feigned name, was also written in such seeming earnestness, with such apparent good faith, that a doubt exists whether Defoe did or did not believe what he wrote. His simple, often vulgar, but always forcible language gives a most delusive air of probability to whatever he describes. An adept at innocent deceptions, his very name was Foe, not Defoe; and the *De* was added, or revived, to give to the butcher's son the air of gentle lineage. Another work of Defoe's, 'The true History of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal the next day after her Death, to one Mrs. Bargrave, at Canterbury, the eighth of September 1705; which Apparition recommends the perusal of Drelin-

court's Book of Consolation against the Fear of Death,' is also a specimen of the *plausible* style of composition. It was a mere effort to sell off by this puff, Dr. Drelincourt's still-born and dull book. The whole is admirably got up; and the narrative is drawn up (there is nothing like a 'lie with a circumstance') by a 'Gentleman, a Justice of the Peace, at Maidstone, in Kent, a very intelligent Person.' The discourse, moreover, is attested 'by a very sober and understanding Gentlewoman, who lives at Canterbury, within a few miles of the house where Mrs. Bargrave lives.' 'Scepticism itself,' remarks Sir Walter Scott, 'could not resist this triple court of evidence so artfully combined.'

Defoe died in 1731, in Cripplegate, London, at the age of seventy. He left a widow and a large family, and it is much to their credit to say that these survivors were in tolerable circumstances, considering his various misfortunes.

Almost contemporary with that of Defoe, the life of Jonathan Swift was marked by vicissitudes of adverse and of good fortune—of great prosperity and of great misery.

The ancient church at Goodrich, in Herefordshire, still boasts a silver cup given for its service by Dean Swift, in honour of his grandfather Thomas Swift, who was vicar there. A monument was also placed in that church of Goodrich, or Gotheridge, as it was then called, by the Dean. One of the few soft traits in his character was his reverence for a grandfather peculiarly unfortunate, and reduced even to starvation during the civil war, in consequence of his adherence to Charles the First.

Pope's lines on a drawing of the monument are preserved in a sheet of paper endorsed: 'Model of a Monument of my Grandfather, with Mr. Pope's roguery.'

'Jonathan Swift
Had the gift
To come from Gutherige;
But is now spoil'd clean
And an Irish dean.

In this church he has put
A stone of two foot,
With a cup, and a can, Sir,
In respect to his grandsire;
So, Ireland, change thy tone.
And cry, Ohone, Ohone!
For England hath its own.'

dition states that the house of the loyal and Rev. as Swift was plundered by the parliamentary troops—he last loaf of bread and all the clothes of the family taken—even to the small habiliments of an infant in adle. That infant was Jonathan, the father of the Dean. s luckless child, growing up to man's estate, became a ter, and migrated to Ireland. He married Abigail e (or Herrick?) a lady of an ancient Leicestershire r; but died in 1667, leaving a daughter and son, the ated Jonathan, who was born on St. Andrew's day in ame year.

small house in what is now called No. 7, Hoey's Court, n, was the place where this extraordinary man first saw ight. Abject poverty oppressed the small family into he came, and funds even to bury Swift's father were sup- by an uncle, into whose family the widow and her children taken; and soon one of the indigent objects disappeared the circle, for Swift was consigned to the care of a . When he was about a year old, she suddenly dis- ared. She had heard, it was afterwards discovered, that a ve at Whitehaven, from whom she expected a legacy, lying. She contrived, therefore, not being able to endure hought of parting with her nursling, to convey him on oard, and to take him with her, and at Whitehaven he ined three years, his mother not choosing to expose him tender age to another sea voyage. His nurse, however, er duty by the sickly child, and taught him, before he ned, to read and spell. At five years of age the future of St. Patrick's could read any chapter in the Bible.

The influence of an unhappy childhood on one's subsequent health of mind and body was never more fully exemplified than in the life of Swift. Poverty and dependence are far sooner comprehended in all their force by children than is supposed. Swift's temper was a proud one. He found his mother poor; he knew himself to be indebted even for the means of education to his uncle, Godwin Smith. His rebellious heart turned in its throbbing of anger in ingratitude to the Author of his being. He kept his birthday as a day of mourning, and made a practice annually of reading that passage of Scripture in which Job execrates the day that a 'man-child was born.' In his mind too he cherished a deep hatred to the uncle who did his best to support and educate him. When he became Dean of St. Patrick's a strange scene occurred at a visitation dinner between him and Archdeacon Whittingham, a ready, forward man, who delighted in attacking 'Mr. Dean.' 'Pray, Mr. Dean,' said the archdeacon, 'was it not your uncle Godwin who educated you?' Swift affected not to hear him. Then the insulting question was repeated in a loud and sneering tone; on which Swift suddenly answered, 'Yes! he gave me the education of a dog.' 'Then,' returned Whittingham, grinning, and clenching his hand, 'you have not the gratitude of a dog.' Personal violence would have been visited on the archdeacon had not the bishop interposed.

As forming a clue to the bitter violent character, and thus as explaining the tendency of many of his writings, the early life of Swift, his career at Trinity College, and his residence in the family of Sir William Temple, are important and interesting. We can only refer to them cursorily, and then hasten to the eventful period when Swift's few good and many bad qualities acted on the public.

His academic career was irregular and dissolute. The great satirical powers he possessed were employed to attack the Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, where, by *special*

grace, he took his Bachelor's degree in 1685. But there is some reason to suppose that this *special grace* was granted on account of Swift's taking his degree earlier than at the time prescribed by the college; and there is every reason to conclude, first, that the story of his begging pardon on his knees, before receiving his degree, and secondly, of his expulsion from the college, are erroneous statements.* War breaking out in Ireland, in 1688, Swift was obliged to leave that country, where he found it impossible to gain a subsistence. He went therefore into Leicestershire, to his mother, who was there, performing the land journey on foot, and was by her recommended to the patronage of her relation, Sir William Temple.

This eminent man, the collateral ancestor of our present illustrious Prime Minister, was, perhaps, one of the best patrons that a young man of ambition and ability could have. He was then, it is true, forty years of age (being born in 1628), a discreet period of life in his own estimation. 'A man,' Sir William Temple used to say, 'should never make love after forty, nor be in business after fifty.' He had still, therefore, much of life before him—though not of love-making—when Swift, as an amanuensis, took up his abode at Moor Park, Sir William's celebrated property.

Sir William, maligned by the prejudiced representations of Bishop Burnet, had those attractive qualities of mind and person that seem hereditary in the Temple family. There is something so English in the name of Temple that one regrets that the estate, whence it receives its peerage, Palmerston, should be Irish. Of a form above the middle height, thin, but well proportioned, with a face full of expression, with grey, sparkling eyes, rich curling hair, endowed with a natural fascination of manner—a gift almost, which had been improved by the most intellectual and select society,—there never was a man who so completely fascinated any one whom he wished

* See Scott's 'Life of Swift.'

to please as this accomplished diplomatist. Such was the patron whom Swift was to please. Lady Temple was a woman of singular excellence. Yet, during the early part of his abode at Moor Park there was little cordiality between Swift and Sir William. What the polished, courteous Temple thought when he first beheld his poor cousin it is not difficult to conceive.

Swift, it is true, was one of those persons whom, looking chiefly to height and to a striking effect of physiognomy, one would call handsome. In person he was tall, robust, and masculine; his deportment was commanding; his walk erect. His features showed the characteristics of his mind, and expressed all the haughty, implacable nature of this public and domestic tyrant. His nose was slightly aquiline; huge bushy eyebrows shaded eyes of azure blue; these, when the Dean was animated, had a peculiar acuteness. Hard, imperative, and even harsh was the aspect of this man. In after-life, if we may so judge from his portraits, a thoughtful, melancholy cast succeeded that stern, dauntless look, which so daunted others.

His voice, although he was admired as a speaker, was sharp and high, especially when he read prayers. Even in his most convivial moods Swift was never known to smile. He had many peculiarities, and one was, an objection to the use of spectacles, which he made a resolution never to wear. Another was an extreme of cleanliness almost like a mania; and that sort of mania is not uncommon: there have been persons whose first symptoms of insanity have been shown in fancying that door-handles, shovels, tongs, scissors, were not pure enough for them to touch.

In conversation, Swift in his best days was considered engaging, on account of his shrewd satirical humour. In after life, from his extensive knowledge of life and character, his powers of repartee were unrivalled; but, like most despots in conversation, he could neither bear contradiction nor endure

a joke. On one occasion, when he had been rallying a certain Alderman Brown all dinner time, the worthy man, who had borne the rough assaults without reply, suddenly raised his head, and seeing Swift eat apple sauce to the wing of a duck, innocently said, 'Mr. Dean, you eat your duck like a goose.' On another occasion he asked Mr. Kenny, a Carmelite priest, 'Why the Catholic church used pictures and images when the Church of England did not?' 'Because,' answered the priest, '*we* are old housekeepers, and you are only new beginners.' Swift was so offended that he left the room. Yet he gave freely enough the jests which he would not take. A man of distinction not remarkable for regularity in paying his debts, chose for his motto '*Eques haud male notus.*' The dean translated it, Better known than trusted. He was fond of inventing proverbs to suit the occasion. Seeing that a gentleman in whose garden he was walking did not invite him to take any fruit, Swift said 'It was a saying of his dear grandmother's

'Always pick a peach
When in your reach.'

And helping himself as he spoke, the whole company did the same. Another time he 'got up an old saying' for a person who had fallen from his horse into the mud—

'The more dirt
The less hurt.'

The man was much consoled with the old trite saying, but wondered, he being himself a collector, that he had never heard that before.'

Swift's humorous sallies were, however, kept under whilst he lived at Moor Park. Gracious, generous, and charming, Sir William Temple was—what so many good people are—uncertain. 'Tis a fault fatal to real home happiness; and to which the higher and the lower classes are very liable: both from the same cause,—the absence of the regulating hand of self-

in love with a person so inferior to him in station and education; but she had no cause for alarm. Swift owned that he was of a 'cold temper;' and in which confession he acknowledged but half the truth. In this instance both his good taste and his selfishness combined to protect him from a step fatal to his future elevation; he declared that he never meant to marry till his fortunes were settled; and even then, he said, he should be so hard to please that he would probably put it off till doomsday. The gallantry with which he had flattered the young girl he excused by saying that he could not endure idleness; and that his intentions were intended only to amuse himself, and to soothe his restless, busy temper. This gratification of his selfish heart he should, he declared, for ever give up whenever he should enter orders; and he doubted not that he should be able 'to lay it down in the porch.' But this habit of amusing his hours of dulness at the expense of others, was but the indication of future conduct, which one cannot call by another name but that of criminality.

Up to an advanced age Swift retained his objections to early marriages. The son of a bishop in Ireland had married without his father's consent, and his family refused to see him. Swift, then Dean of St. Patrick's, being one day in company with the youth, said to him, 'I will tell you a story. When I was a schoolboy in Kilkenny, and in the lower form, I longed very much to have a horse of my own to ride on. One day I saw a poor man leading a very mangy lean horse out of the town, to kill him for the skin. I asked the man if he would sell him, which he readily consented to, upon my offering somewhat more than the price of the hide, which was all the money I had in the world. I immediately got on him, to the great envy of some of my schoolfellows, and to the ridicule of others, and rode him about the town. The horse soon tired, and lay down. As I had no stable to put him into, nor any money to pay for his sustenance, I began to

find out what a foolish bargain I had made, and cried heartily for the loss of my cash; but the horse dying soon after gave me much relief.' To this the young clergyman answered, 'Sir, your story is very good, and applicable to my case. I own I deserve such a rebuke;' and then burst into tears. The next day the Dean went to the Lord Lieutenant, and prevailed on him to give the young man a living; and soon afterwards brought about a reconciliation between him and his father.

Notwithstanding his principles of prudence, Swift had contracted an engagement, before his introduction to Stella, with a young lady named Jane Waryng, or, as he styled her, Varina. Perhaps this was the only love affair in which the affections (such as they were) of Swift were really engaged. At one time he even offered to give up all prospects of interest, and to enter into the bonds of marriage; 'a just and honourable action,' he calls it, 'which would furnish health to her, and unspeakable happiness to both.' Varina's influence had consisted partly in her apparent indifference to her wayward suitor. When she suddenly, too suddenly, consented to make him happy, he recoiled in dismay. Varina was no longer Varina, but 'Miss Jane Waryng,' and Swift's letters were henceforth full of doubts and scruples. Had the physicians thought better of her health, which had, they alleged, presented some obstacles to marriage? Was she competent to manage his domestic affairs? Would she comply with his wishes as to the improvement of her mind? Would she direct her affections to the same subjects as those to which his own were devoted? Would she consider the place where *he* should live, more welcome than courts or cities without him? If all this could be promised him the condescending lover was 'willing,' he loftily declared, 'to marry her, though without personal beauty or large fortune.'

We wish we could certify that an instant dismissal was flung back in his face, and the correspondence closed there, then and

for ever. But that it *was* closed is all we know. Varina was saved from the miseries which even then were hovering over the fate of the devoted Stella. And Swift, before he had thus insulted the plain and patient Jane, had seen her over whose life his influence evermore presided like a scorching planet.

The death of Sir William Temple in 1698-9, broke up the home in which Swift had passed four useful and studious, but happy years; but did not dissolve the link which bound Esther Johnson's destiny for ever with his. He accompanied the Earl of Berkeley, one of the Lords Justices, to Ireland, as chaplain and secretary. But this latter office being thought inconsistent with orders, Lord Berkeley, with 'a poor apology,' as Swift called it, dismissed him; and substituted a Mr. Bushe, as secretary, promising, at the same time, to give Swift the first good living that should fall vacant. Nevertheless, when the Deanery of Derry was in his gift the Earl was not true to his word; and Bushe was authorized to offer the rich preferment to Swift for 1000*l.* Swift's answer was given in these words:—'God confound you both for a couple of scoundrels;' and he forthwith left the Castle. Lord Berkeley, afraid, however, of offending such a man, presented him with the Rectory of Agher and the Vicarage of Laracor and Rathbeggan; the united stipends of which amounted to 230*l.* a year. This provision was ample; and it is ascertained from Swift's account-book that his annual expenses for the years 1700 and 1701 did not exceed 100*l.*: 12*l.* 10*s.* of which were spent in charity.

It was at the Castle that Swift had learned the full value of female society in that of the Countess of Berkeley and of her daughter. And it was at Dublin that he composed his 'Meditations on a Broomstick,' a sort of sequel to Boyle's 'Meditations;' and Lady Berkeley delighted to make him read this *jeu d'esprit* for the amusement of her inmates.

Manners and customs were primitive in those days, and Swift walked straight down to Laracor, incognito, until he

arrived at the house of the curate. Then he announced himself as his master. Of course all was hurry and subserviency. The curate's wife had to lay by the vicar's clean shirt and stockings, which he had carried in his pocket, trembling all the while at the air of authority assumed by Swift, only, however, as the preface to acts of neighbourly kindness. Swift delighted in inspiring fear. One lady, a Mrs. Watson, recollected to her dying day how he had once stolen behind her when her father was out of the room, and, slapping her on the back, said, 'You will now remember Dean Swift as long as you live.' And many a servant, going to be hired, could testify to the extraordinary services he pretended to require of them; and the singular and alarming questions which he put to them, although merely as a trial of character.

Swift made a capital country clergyman. He first directed his attention to the restoration of the Church, and spent a large sum in repairing the dilapidated edifice. His next care was to improve the vicarage-house; to form a pleasant garden; to widen a rivulet into a canal; to plant willows by its side:—all his embellishments have long since been destroyed by time and negligence; yet what so easy to keep up as a pretty, umbrageous walk or garden? Yet it is pleasant to record that a late Bishop of Meath, at his visitation, addressing his clergy, turned more especially to the Vicar of Laracor, and exhorted him, if possible, to restore the traces of what Swift had formed into a pleasant parsonage garden.

Stella, and a lady, Mrs. Dingley, selected to be her companion, were soon invited to follow Swift into Ireland; and now, perhaps, the happiest period of his restless life commenced. He was occupied, he was appreciated, he was beloved. Yet one canker—which no being has ever satisfactorily explained—corrupted every source of calm enjoyment.

Alone in the world, he abjured marriage; beloved, he wounded the affections that were his; suspected, he endured in silence the suspicions which a word might have refuted.

His intimacy with Stella was indeed limited by the strictest rules of decorum. He never saw her without the presence of Mrs. Dingley; to whom he paid the same attention as those which he ventured to bestow on the loving and trusting Stella. Neither did these two ladies venture to live in Laracor, but had lodgings in the town of Trim. When Swift left his home, they occupied the vicarage-house at Laracor. Before he returned, they retired to Trim. It is true that Swift and Stella both contemplated an union so soon as his income should reach a certain sum; but that period either never arrived, or was never recurred to; and Swift became, as the virtuous and high-minded Scott remarks, the 'victim of an over-prudence,' which gradually hardened into a determined selfishness.

Laracor, like most country places, had its oddities. Unlike Carlow, which Swift describes as

> 'High church and low steeple,
> Dirty tower, and proud people,'

the inhabitants of Laracor seem to have been a simple, genial people, disposed to enjoy the vagaries of their pastor. We are sorry, that though it is admitted that Swift's church was but thinly attended, we cannot honestly insert the story of his addressing his clerk as 'Dearly beloved Roger, you and I are gathered together.' His relations, of course, confessed that Swift was fully capable of such a joke; but all alleged that it was never heard of till his life by Lord Orrery appeared; and one of the family, Mr. Theophilus Swift, found the very same story in an old jest-book of the previous century (1665). Yet there *was* a Roger—Roger Coxe, a parish clerk, and a humorist. The race has died out now; and one no longer hears of such prominent characters as that clerk in some Scottish Episcopalian church, who, singing out the first verse of the psalm, and observing certain ladies of rank, coming very late,

in the aisle, called out: 'Make room for the Lady Dundas's,' and finished the cadence,

'Nor stand in sinners' way.'

Roger was the butt of all Swift's jokes. 'Why that scarlet waistcoat, Roger?' cried Swift. 'I am, please your reverence, one of the church militant,' was Roger's answer. 'Why don't you bid for these poultry, Roger?' asked the vicar at a sale of farming stock. 'No, sir,' answered Roger, 'they're just agoing to Hatch.' *Hatch* being a farmer who had just bought them.

Happy as Swift might have been, his felicity was troubled by an occurrence on which, for a brief space, the fate of poor Stella hung. After her arrival in Ireland she received an offer of marriage. The suitor was a clergyman, a friend of Swift's, named Tisdale, and to his honourable suit there was not a single objection. He was a man of character and talent. Swift's heart beat uneasily at this new difficulty. The proposal was made to him, as the guardian of the blooming Stella. He must, he perceived, either lay it before her, with all its advantages, or offer to her himself. Was there a struggle in that selfish, remorseless heart? Let us hope so. To lose Stella must have been terrible. She was then, at eighteen, in the full perfection of a beauty enhanced by intelligence and sweetness. Her hair, raven black, set off the finest features and complexion in the world; and her figure, with a girlish tendency to *embonpoint*, was perfect. Poor fated being! She was in Swift's hands, and his empire over her was strengthened, and for ever, by this untoward event. She consented, however, it appears to receive Tisdale as her suitor; but Swift, as her guardian, exacted such exorbitant terms for Stella's dower, in case of widowhood, that Tisdale could not comply. His honourable attachment was unsuccessful, and Stella became the enthralled victim of one, who, whilst he often declared he loved 'her

better than his life a thousand millions of times,' took advantage of her unprotected situation to interfere with her best interests.

Swift and Tisdale continued, nominally, friends; yet the perfidious Jonathan did not scruple to amuse his friends with epigrams, at the expense of one who had so nearly carried away Stella from her bondage; Swift excusing himself by saying that Tisdale 'went from house to house to show his wit upon him.'

To Stella this friendship with Swift was existence; to Swift merely a source of selfish relaxation from the pursuit of ambition—an interlude in that intricate drama of political life, in the mazes of which he shortly became involved.

Into this we shall not follow him. His own profession of faith was, that as a clergyman, he was a high churchman; as a politician, a Whig. 'Such a distinction between opinions in Church and State has not,' as Sir Walter Scott remarks, 'frequently existed;' the high churchmen being usually Tories, and the low church divines universally Whigs.' Swift had formed his opinions early in life, and addressed an ode to Archbishop Sancroft on his refusal to take the oaths to William and Mary, beginning with these lines:—

'Since at the tavern I can't meet you,
With paper embassy I greet you;
T' advise you not yourself to expose
By a refusal of the oaths,
In spite of fellowship and pupils,
To weigh your conscience out in scruples.'

Then he asks him:—

'Why in the name of the predicaments,
And all your analytic sense,
Will you deny poor affirmations,
In their turns too, to make negations?'

* * * *

'He who to two things takes an oath
Is by the last absolved from both;
For each oath being an affirmation,
Both, as 'twas owned, make a negation.'

'I've hopes that you have slyly taken
The oaths elsewhere, to save your bacon.
So spark, by country clap half undone,
Takes coach, and steals a cure at London.'

Swift thought it impossible to defend the Revolution on any other than Whig principles; but in referring to religion he confessed decisively himself, to Lord Somers, when he said, 'to be a high churchman,' and added these words: 'that I could not conceive how any one, who wore the habit of a clergyman, could be otherwise. That I had observed with what insolence and haughtiness some lords of the high church-party treated not only their own chaplains, but all other clergymen whatsoever; and thought that this was sufficiently recompensed by their professions of zeal to the church; that I had likewise observed how the Whig lords took a direct contrary measure; treated the persons of particular clergymen with particular courtesy, but showed much contempt and ill will for the order in general.'*

The fame of this aspiring man had already made him an object of curiosity, when one day 'Addison's little senate,' as it was called, of great men, was assembled at Button's Coffee-house. Several times had the coterie of wits remarked a strange clergyman enter the coffee-room; he seemed to know no one; and his custom was to lay his hat on a table, walk backwards and forwards, for an hour, taking apparently no notice of those around him; and then, to go away, paying his money at the bar, without having ever opened his lips. The *inconnû* acquired thence the name among the wits of the 'mad parson.' One evening Addison and others were watching him, when they saw him cast his eyes on a gentleman in boots, just come up from the country. The mad parson, they perceived, was going to address him; all voices were hushed, and every one sidled near to hear the colloquy. Swift went up to the country gentleman, and very abruptly uttered this

* 'Life of Swift,' p. 80, note.

question: 'Pray, sir, do you ever remember any good weather in the world?' A little astonished, the squire replied, 'Yes, sir; I thank God I remember a great deal of good weather in my time.' 'That is more,' Swift rejoined, 'than I can say. I never remember any weather that was not too hot, or too cold; too wet, or too dry; but, however God Almighty contrives it, at the end of the year 'tis all very well.' Upon saying this, he took up his hat, and walked out of the coffee-house without a word; all those present staring after him, and still more confirmed in the opinion of his being mad.

Such was Swift's introduction to that clique which he soon over-ruled with his surpassing genius. Steele and Addison were henceforth his associates, till politics severed him from those honest men. And his fame was enhanced immeasurably by the appearance in 1704 of 'The Tale of a Tub,' an allegory, the idea of which was suggested by Rabelais, and the purport of which was to exalt the Reformed Church of England in opposition both to that of Rome and to the Presbyterians. It is dangerous to employ the weapons of wit and sarcasm even in a good cause. Swift's moral perceptions were coarse; his zeal had nothing elevated in its tone, and its sincerity may be doubted from his want of reverence, and of delicacy. Good men, even of his opinions, read the 'Tale of a Tub' with horror; wit cannot, in the opinion of earnest minds, atone for grossness. Swift's intention in the satire was misunderstood, and he had the mortification of hearing that it was approved by Voltaire, who recommended it to his proselytes as a work calculated to lower the respect paid to religion, and to advance the theories of sceptics.

What, perhaps, more cruelly vexed Swift was that Queen Anne, simple, and really religious as she was, refused in after times to receive any recommendation to make the author of the 'Tale of a Tub' a bishop.

Repulsive as the work was to most minds, it was of service to the high church party: yet we believe the good, or the ill

that it has done, to be for ever extinct. Its points now fall harmless. Few will read it with any keen pleasure. It is that nettle without the sting, which boys call the blind nettle. Time has obliterated much that then agitated society, and the 'Tale of a Tub' is almost to us, as if written in a dead language. But, in reviewing Swift's career, we must henceforth regard him, not as an unknown stranger—'the mad parson'—or, as an expletive amid the gifted circle at Button's—but as the flattered guest at Lord Oxford's political parties; the friend of Arbuthnot, and the man whom Addison called the 'most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age.'

Yet, still Swift was only Vicar of Laracor, without any distinct promise of a canonry or prebendary; and with Sharpe, Archbishop of York, as his enemy, on account of the 'Tale of a Tub.'

Dr. South, the eloquent chaplain of Charles the Second, was supposed, long before his life ceased, to be dying. In 1710, Swift had great hopes of the preferment which South's decease would lay open. The 'odd fish,' as Charles the Second dubbed South, survived, as if to plague Swift, till 1714. South, with his splendid eloquence, his honest warmth, his noble independence of character, his righteous, pure life, had some qualities not unlike those of Swift. Those who have read his sermons (and to *hear* them read by a powerful voice, and that voice the organ of a cultivated mind, is one of the greatest of intellectual luxuries) can easily admit that in humour South equalled, if he did not excel Swift. Whilst carrying on a furious controversy with Bishop Sherlock, South, it is believed, found time to write a ballad, called '*A Soldier and a Sailor*,' in answer to Dr. Burnet's Archæologia, impugning the authority of the Old Testament.

'A Dean and Prebendary,
Had once a new vagary,

And were at doubtful strife, Sir,
Who led the better life, Sir,
And was the better man,
And was the better man.'

They argue it out. 'Preb.' Dr. South replying like thunder. But, as the argument had in it the fearless and irreverent jocularity so justly blamed in the 'Tale of a Tub,' we omit some stanzas :—

'Now while these two were raging,
And in dispute engaging,
The Master of the Charter
Said both had caught a Tartar,
For Gods, Sir, there was none.

'That all the Books of Moses,
Were nothing but supposes.
That he deserv'd rebuke, Sir,
Who wrote the Pentateuch, Sir,
'Twas nothing but a sham, Sir.

'That as for Father Adam,
With Mrs. Eve his Madam,
'Twas nothing but a joke, Sir,
And well-invented flam.

'Thus in the battle royal,
As none would take denial,
The dame for which they strove, Sir,
Could neither of them love, Sir,
Since all had given offence.

'She, therefore, slily waiting,
Left all three fools a prating ;
And being in a fright, Sir,
Religion took her flight, Sir,
And ne'er was heard of since,
And ne'er was heard of since.'

Thus did the learned South treat the heresies of that day. Nevertheless, in spite of this boldness, the archbishopric of Dublin was offered to him, during the reign of Charles the Second ; and in that of Anne, he declined the see of Rochester, pressed upon him after the death of Dr. Sprat, saying, 'that such a chair would be too uneasy for an old infirm man to sit

in,' and he held himself much better satisfied to live upon the eaves-droppings of the church, than to fare sumptuously, by being placed on the pinnacle of it. A friend asking him concerning the state of his health, just after Atterbury had been made Bishop of Rochester, 'Within an inch of the grave, sir,' was the reply, 'since I have lived to see a gentleman, who was born the very year I was made one of the prebendaries of the church, made a dean of it.'

Swift, meantime, waited even for the eaves-droppings in vain. Queen Anne died whilst poor old South was still in the world, weary and longing for rest. When he heard of her Majesty's death, he began in good earnest to set his house in order: 'for it was time,' he said, 'to prepare his journey to a blessed immortality, since all that was good and gracious to the very breath of his nostrils had made its departure to the regions of bliss and eternal happiness.'

Swift, who had thought that South's journey should have taken place long before, was, of course, equally disgusted at the accession of George the First. He continued during the whole of that period, from 1710 until the death of Stella, to record every incident, and every thought in his diary. That diary—consistently with the whole tenor of his conduct—was addressed to Mrs. Dingley, but intended, of course, for Stella.

The principal features of this faithful transcript of Swift's mind were his reception by ministerialists; the publication of the 'Examiner;' his interviews with Harley, Earl of Oxford, who offended him by the offer of fifty pounds, and still more by wishing to make him his chaplain. Then came the social hours spent with Harley and St. John; and his and their occasional coolnesses.

In all his intercourse with the great world, Swift affected the loftiest independence. 'He assumed,' says Lord Orrery, 'more the air of a patron than of a friend; he dictated rather than advised. With all this there was the greatest possible

value set by Swift upon position in his own person. He was elated with the appearance of enjoying ministerial confidence. He enjoyed the shadow, whilst the substance was withheld from him. He was employed, not trusted, and at the same time he imagined himself a subtle diver, who dexterously shot down into the profoundest regions of politics, he was suffered only to sound the shallows nearest the shore, and was scarce admitted to descend below the froth at the top. Perhaps the deeper bottom were too muddy for his inspection.' Swift himself, in his address to Lord Oxford, gives the following amusing account of his first acquaintance with Harley:—

'Harley, the nation's great support,
Retiring home one day from court,
(His mind with public care possess'd,
All Europe's business in his breast)
Observ'd a parson near Whitehall
Cheapening old authors on a stall.
The priest was pretty well in ease,
And show'd some humour in his face;
Look'd with an easy careless mien,
A perfect stranger to the spleen.'*

Lord Oxford, who, Swift says,

'Loved mischief better than his meat,'

sent his secretary, Erasmus Lewis, to learn who this strange parson might be:

'If possible, to learn his story,
And whether he were Whig or Tory.'

Lewis,

'Quickly did the matter sift,
Found out that it was Dr. Swift:
A clergyman of special note
For shunning those of his own coat;
Which made his brethren of the gown
Take care betimes to run him down.'

* See Swift's Poems. Ode in Imitation of Horace, Book I., Ep. vii.

ıs found that he was

> 'In state opinions *à la mode*.'

, he

> 'Kept company with men of wit,
> Who often fathered what he writ;
> His works were hawk'd in every street,
> But seldom rose above a sheet;
> Of late, indeed, the paper stamp
> Did very much his genius cramp,
> And since he could not spend his fire,
> He now intended to retire.'

ıt Harley, convinced that he would be just the man to him, asked the doctor to dinner. The honour was at first ɜed, then repeated, and accepted. And—

> 'The Doctor now obeys the summons,
> Likes both his company and commons;
> Displays his talent, sits till ten,
> Next day, invited, comes again.
> Soon grows domestic, seldom fails
> Either at morning or at meals.'

r Walter Scott suggests that Lord Orrery, in the bitter ıge we have quoted, was paying Swift off for the tyranny ırred by his lordship during the life of the social despot, the following description of Swift, in 1713, by Bishop net, confirms the truth of that passage.

Dr. Swift came,' says the zealous Whig bishop, 'into the e-house, and had a bow from every one but me. When me to the ante-chamber to wait before prayers, Dr. Swift the principal man of talk and business, and acted as a er of requests. He was soliciting the Earl of Arran to k to his brother, the Duke of Ormond, to get a chaplain's e established in the garrison of Hull, for Mr. Fiddes, a yman in that neighbourhood, who had lately been in and published sermons to pay fees. He was promising Mr. rold to undertake, with my Lord Treasurer, that according is petition he should obtain a salary of two hundred pounds

per annum, as minister of the English Church at Rotterdam. He stopped F. Gwynne, Esq., going in with the red bag to the Queen, and told him aloud that he had something to say to him from my Lord Treasurer. He talked with the son of Dr. Davenant to be sent abroad, and took out his pocket-book, and wrote down several things, as *memoranda*, to do for him. He turned to the fire and took out his gold watch, and, telling him the time of the day, complained that it was very late. A gentleman said he was too fast. "How can I be it," says the doctor, "if the courtiers give me a watch that won't go right?" Then he instructed a young nobleman that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope (a Papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, "for which, he must have them all subscribe, for," says he, "the author *shall not* begin to print till *I have* a thousand guineas for him." Lord Treasurer (Oxford) after leaving the Queen, came through the room, beckoning Dr. Swift to follow him.' Both went off before prayers.

In 1713 Swift was made Dean of St. Patrick's, and he henceforth took up his abode permanently in Dublin. His chances of a bishopric were now more remote than ever. The Earl of Nottingham, in speaking upon the Schism Bill, one enactment of which was that all teachers of youth should be licensed by the archbishop, or bishop of the diocese, made the following allusion to Swift:—

'My lords, I have many children, and I know not whether God Almighty will vouchsafe to let me live to give them the education I should wish they had; therefore, my lords, I own I tremble when I think that a certain divine, who is hardly suspected of being a Christian (meaning as we read in the Annals, Dr. Swift) is in a fair way of being a bishop, and may one day give licence to those who shall be entrusted with the instruction of youth.'

Being obliged, on entering his deanery, to contract debts which would swallow up all its profits for three years, Swift

declared that he would petition Queen Anne either to give him a thousand pounds, or to hang him, for he had deserved the one or the other. But his application was unsuccessful, and at this time the famous Scriblerus Club, of which Oxford, St. John, Arbuthnot, Pope, and Gay were members, was for ever disunited and finally dissolved by the violence of political faction. Most of Swift's valuable friendships, especially that with Addison, were, from the same cause, finally, irretrievably broken.

But the Dean of St. Patrick's had a still more severe, though secret vexation to encounter in the state of his own feelings—for heart he had none. It was during his long sojourn in England that he formed the acquaintance of a Mrs. Vanhomrigh, the widow of a Dutch merchant. She resided with her two daughters in Bury Street, where Swift also lodged, and his circumstances, and a connection which Mrs. Vanhomrigh had with certain estates in Ireland, produced the fatal intimacy between the Dean and these ladies.

Mary and Esther Vanhomrigh were then in the bloom of youth; their brother dying young, they were regarded as coheiresses of a fortune which amounted to about 16,000*l.*, and which was invested in some Irish estates, which had been forfeited by their original proprietors during the war, and purchased by their late father, Mr. Vanhomrigh, on easy terms.

Esther Vanhomrigh was about twenty years of age when Swift first knew her. Whether it is the natural interest that one feels for poor Stella, or whether there is something too marked and too *emancipated* in the character of this unhappy girl, to attract interest, it is not easy to say; but, on first entering into her sad story, our sympathies are against her. Unlike Stella, she was plain, or, to borrow the words of Lord Orrery, 'far from being either beautiful or genteel.' She was clever, and ambitious to shine; somewhat pert in society, she aimed at the character of a wit; she was vain, sensitive, and spoiled. Hitherto life had offered her nothing but pros-

perity, and she had that strong self-will which the world is certain heavily to chastise, and bring to shame and suffering.

To such a woman as Esther, such a man as Swift was peculiarly dangerous, when we consider the circumstances in which he stood to Stella. He became, however, intimate in the house: he established that sort of intimacy which is so rarely obtained in English society; he went in and out; he acted as a preceptor to the two sisters, and he kept his correspondence with the far-distant Stella a profound secret.

He must soon have read Vanessa's sentiments had she not disclosed them herself, which she is stated to have done in the very awkward form of a proposal of marriage. Hitherto, whilst Swift and Vanessa had intended love, they had displayed friendship only; the language of that calm, and often abused household deity was still on their lips—but burning love rioted in the heart of Esther; and in that of Swift, a response of passion which he seemed never to have felt for Stella. For Stella his sentiments were those of an early affection, which, like dead flowers, had faded away, leaving only such perfume as recalls the fragrance of their former bloom. Pity, esteem, confidence, were poor Stella's tribute. Esther Vanhomrigh claimed the little that he had of passionate love to give to any human being, at least, so, in reading those passages of Swift's life which relate to her, it seems to us.

When Vanessa broke out into expressions of attachment, there was but one part for Swift to have pursued, and by one act he could have saved himself and others from much misery. He should at once have owned his tacit yet actual engagement to Stella, and then have bidden Esther Vanhomrigh farewell for ever. But Swift was wholly wanting in honour; of that higher sense of virtue which may be called in to help us in difficult situations he had no conception. He first

laughed at Miss Vanhomrigh, and treated her advances as a joke—then, on her persisting, he absolutely refused her proposal. He attempted to excuse himself, and to console Esther by writing the poem which he called 'Cadenus and Vanessa.' Cadenus being the anagram of Decanus, a dean; and Vanessa applied to Esther Vanhomrigh in raillery, on account of her vanity. This poem was written in 1713, whilst Swift was still in England.

Swift's letters to Stella now became cold and almost indifferent. M. D. and the 'willows at Laracor' were no longer the first objects with the conscious 'Cadenus;' and poor Stella's heart was tormented with jealous apprehensions. On Swift's obtaining the deanery, she naturally expected that immediate arrangements would be made for her marriage with Swift; but a hint was given her, that whilst her small means were to be increased by any overplus that might occur in his stipend, the usual terms between them were to remain unchanged; and Stella, broken-spirited, even then in the prime of her life, was too weakly and fondly devoted to remonstrate. She had no parent, no near friend able to do that office for her: we may blame her—and *every* woman who loses her conscious dignity deserves blame—but we must take into account early prepossessions on her side; we must remember the marvellous influence exercised by this man over those with whom he came into collision. Poor Stella suffered a life-long retribution for her fatal mistake in trusting Swift's honour.

About this time Mrs. Vanhomrigh died; she had lived beyond her fortune, and left debts, for some of which her daughters were responsible; so to avoid an arrest, as they were not able immediately to pay these demands, they left England, and privately followed Swift, on his return to Ireland.

Swift's removal to Dublin, as Dean of St. Patrick's, 'determined,' we are told, 'the colour of his life; bounded his

views, and showed him at once what he might possess, and for what he might hope.' 'A sense of his mortality,' he declares, 'now came upon him with such influence, that after fifteen years, it constantly recurred when he first awaked in the morning, and was not dismissed till he again began to sleep.' It did not actuate him either to regret for what had passed, or to generous resolves for the time to come. Whatever were his faults, he made nevertheless an excellent Dean; and soon reduced those members of the chapter who were prejudiced against him, to respect and obedience. His irresistible influence over the minds of others was such that he sat, we are told, 'like Jupiter in the synod of the gods, when in the chapter-house.'

At his first arrival in Dublin, Swift was considered to be a second Sacheverel; he was followed along the streets by the mobs of one party, and pelted with stones and dirt; by that of another faction he was hailed with shouts of triumph. Although in debt, and constrained to adopt a rigid economy, Swift kept two public days a week, which were, eventually, well attended. At these Stella was present with Mrs. Dingley, and the entertainments owed the character of dignity and good taste, by which they were marked, to her arrangements; yet, in that circle, she appeared only as a friend. She was invited everywhere with the Dean; but she was still only 'Mrs. Johnson;' her position was, however, accepted as honourable, and she made friendships amongst persons of both sexes, for all admired her. Yet Swift's conduct seemed decisive enough. So soon as he was settled in the deanery, he secured lodgings for Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Dingley upon Ormond's Quay, on the other side of the Liffey; and the same decorum as heretofore attended every meeting.

Meantime, Vanessa had arrived in Dublin, and Swift's situation became truly melancholy and perplexing. Passionate appeals from Vanessa alarmed, and, perhaps, touched him;

for he seems, either through fear or love, to have shrunk from casting her off for ever.

'You bid me be easy,' she wrote to him (in 1714), 'and you would see me as often as you could. You had better have said as often as you could get the better of your inclination so much; or, as often as you remember there was such an one in the world. If you continue to treat me as you do, you will not be made uneasy by me long. It is impossible to describe what I have suffered since I saw you last. I am sure I could have borne the rack much better than those killing, killing words of yours. Sometimes I have resolved to die without seeing you more; but those resolves, to your misfortune, do not last long. For there is something in human nature that prompts one so to find relief in this world, I must give way to it; and beg you would see me, and speak kindly to me; for I am sure you'd not condemn any one to suffer what I have done, could you but know it. The reason I write to you is, because I cannot tell it to you should I see you. For when I begin to complain, then you are angry; and there is something in your looks so awful, that it strikes me dumb. Oh! that you may but have so much regard for me left, that this complaint may touch your soul with pity! I say as little as ever I can; did you but know what I thought I am sure it would move you to forgive me, and believe I cannot help telling you this and live.'

This appeal was met with fresh expressions of regard by Swift—the fire was fed with fuel—and the terrible struggle between doubt and love was kept alive in Vanessa's heart during ten miserable years. Still this astute, plausible man sustained the character of a preceptor; still he 'bowed, but never talked of love;' still he pretended to receive as a monitor and friend the despairing confessions of a breaking heart.

Friends who esteemed her, surrounded the unhappy Vanessa, whose prime of life was thus consumed in following a

shadow; but they knew not the dread secret of her soul. One suitor, Dean Winter, a man of character and fortune, applied to Swift, as the staid friend of Miss Vanhomrigh, to recommend to that unhappy woman his proposal of marriage. It was rejected instantaneously; and Vanessa, who retreated to Celbridge, continued to write to Swift, entreating him to marry her. Had he been, even at last, candid—had he told her his obligations to another, Vanessa might still have been saved. But he evaded her questions,—and a mournful catastrophe ensued.

Stella—the patient, the admired, the lovely Stella—was sinking, meantime, under the misery of doubt, and the discredit of suspicion. She was threatened with decline. Swift was conscience-stricken for once, his selfish heart was touched to the core; yet he dared not speak openly to her; he charged his early friend and tutor, Dr. St. George Ashe, Bishop of Clogher, with that task; and entreated him to ask the cause of that deep melancholy into which Stella had fallen. He must have anticipated the answer. In it were summed up the whole history of a miserable life. His coldness of late, her doubtful position, the animadversions of others—these, and the reports of his correspondence with Vanessa, were the sources of that disease to which no physical skill could minister. The reply to this confession was guarded, cold, and almost insulting. Swift, through his friend, informed her that, on certain conditions of secrecy, of living apart, of never taking his name, of only in the depths of her pure heart deeming herself his wife—Stella might hope to go through the ceremony of marriage with him. And to these conditions his broken-spirited victim, crushed to the very dust, consented. She was married to Swift in the garden of the deanery, by the Bishop of Clogher, in the year 1716: they then separated, as if there were no bond between them, but that which had so long existed. So well was the secret kept, that this act of tardy justice has even been

within these few years contested by some, who consider the story as mere hearsay. Immediately after the ceremony Swift sank into the deepest gloom. A friend of Stella's, alarmed for his reason, went to consult Archbishop King on the subject, and found the archbishop in tears; upon inquiring the reason, Archbishop King said: 'You have just met the most unhappy man on earth; but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question.' The silence of his friends was indeed such, that to this day Swift's misery and his conduct have never been accounted for. His love for Stella seems, however, to have returned; 'passionately and dearly,' we are, indeed, told they loved each other; and miserable as Stella's existence still was, it was solaced by the reflection that Swift could never, whilst she lived, be the husband of any other woman.

She bore her secret sorrow meekly, but it consumed her; and the gentle heart was, till it ceased to beat, weighed down by hopeless depression. A friend of Mrs. Delany's remembered Stella: she used to visit at Dr. Delany's with Mrs. Dingley, at his Wednesday parties, before Dr. Delany married the charming widow now, through her interesting correspondence, so well known to us. Mrs. Delany once met Stella there, and was struck with the beauty of her face, and especially with her fine dark eyes, which had a pensive, but not a melancholy expression. She was very pale, and her hair was black as a raven. After Swift's death, a lock of that black hair was found wrapped up in paper, on which are written these words, in Swift's hands, 'Only a woman's hair.' True to the last to the secret of his affection and remorse.

Even in the odes which were addressed regularly to Stella on her birthday, an affectation of friendly bluntness appears. Hints that the once gentle temper of Stella was soured occur, nor can we wonder at, nor can we blame Swift's victim, if such were the case. Stella wrote verses also, and the following

lines on 'Jealousy,' speak of sufferings which are, of all others, the most likely to produce irritation of the nerves. So long as confidence exists much may be borne; when it is withdrawn every incident suspected is misconstrued:—

'ON JEALOUSY.

'O shield me from his rage, Celestial Powers!
This tyrant that embitters all my hours.
Ah love! pride poorly play'd the hero's part;
You conquer'd, but you can't defend my heart.
When first I bent beneath your gentle reign,
I thought this monster banished from your train;
But you would raise him to support your throne,
And now he claims your empire as his own.
Or tell me, tyrants, have you both agreed
That, where one reigns, the other shall succeed?'

Vanessa, meantime, was a continual source of misery to the Dean. In vain had he ever assumed towards her the convenient character of a father and tutor.

'His conduct might have made him styled
A father, and the nymph his child,
That innocent delight he took
To see the virgin mind her book,
Was but the master's secret joy
In school to hear the finest boy.'

In vain did he now entreat her not to foster her fruitless attachment by retirement; but to go into society, to take exercise, and to turn her thoughts to other subjects. Another suitor appeared, and Dr. Price, afterwards Archbishop of Cashel, made a proposal to Vanessa, and was rejected. Until the year 1720, seven years after their acquaintance had begun, Swift had never visited Vanessa at Celbridge; though now the husband of another, this dishonourable man went, however, several times to Marley Abbey, near Celbridge, where Vanessa lived. In this mansion, built in the form of a cloister, Vanessa received Dean Swift. When she knew that he was coming, she planted a laurel or two, as Swift liked that shrub, in addition to almost a thicket of those shrubs

which there was in her garden. That garden was the scene of her lonely, melancholy walks, for she never went out of her own domain. Her neighbours respected and admired her; but she never returned their visits.

There her sad face, and her figure, might bear traces of premature age coming on; there, those who watched her might see the mournful wreck of indulged feelings; but when Swift came all was excitement. Vanessa planted her laurels, and a few days of fleeting delight were hers.

The arbour where they used to sit, is still called Vanessa's bower; formerly a few trees had been trained into a close arbour, which commanded a view of the Liffey. Here they read, and here, 'when Cadenus blessed the scene'—

> 'Still listening to his tuneful tongue
> The truths which angels might have sung,'

Vanessa's few hours of dangerous bliss were known.

> 'My guide, instructor, lover, friend,
> (Dear names) in one idea blend.'

Thus she expressed her sentiments; thus was the mental disease, which was her doom, disguised, even to herself.

Although a long undefined jealousy fixed itself upon one object, Vanessa had for years been suspicious of the nature of Swift's intimacy with Stella; her uneasiness, or, at any rate, the expression of it, was pacified by the slow decline of Stella's health; and the hope that ere long the still lovely rival might cease to exist. Nevertheless, after years of misery, Vanessa wrote to Stella. She asked her what was the nature of the connection between her and Dr. Swift. Stella answered the inquiry at once: 'She was the wedded wife of one who had deceived, humiliated, and injured Vanessa under the garb of instructing her in

> 'The truths which angels might have sung.'*

Having thus replied, Stella enclosed Vanessa's letter with

* Ode to Spring, by Vanessa. See Scott's 'Life of Swift.'

some indignant lines from herself to the Dean, and retired to the house of a Mr. Ford, near Dublin, without awaiting Swift's return.

The scene which ensued at Celbridge was fearful. Swift appeared on horseback one day, before the door of the house. He entered. His face, Lord Orrery tells us, had always a severity of expression which even his smiles could not soften; and which no gaiety nor sparkling wit could irradiate with the placid sweetness of which the countenance of a man at ease in heart, can alone give. But, when in anger, it was hideously terrific.

In the heat of passion, he rushed into the room where one who loved him only too well was sitting. Vanessa had often seen his bursts of wrath, often quailed beneath his frown; but now, conscious of what she had done, she could not speak —she could not rally—she was unable even to ask him to sit down. Swift spoke not a word; but, throwing a letter upon the table, he left the house, and returned to Dublin.

In a few weeks—weeks of utter silence on the part of Vanessa—he learned the result of his visit,—Miss Vanhomrigh was dead. On opening the letter which he had cruelly thrown down, she found it contained only hers to Stella. Her heart was broken. The mystery of the last ten years was revealed—the veil was lifted from the perfidious bond which had so long enchained her—it was too much. According to some accounts she only lived ten days after the crash of every hope. Some there were hard enough to say that she drowned in drinking the anguish of those few days. She had, however, the courage and the clearness of mind to cancel a will in which she had left Swift all her fortune, and to make another, choosing for her heirs Dr. Berkeley, the disinterested, accomplished, and excellent Bishop of Cloyne, and Serjeant Marshall, afterwards Judge Marshall, a relation of whom she knew but little. She desired the correspondence between her and Dean Swift to be published, but Bishop Berkeley

disobeyed that injunction. The letters of the Dean he found were too cautious, and vague; those of Vanessa passionate and indiscreet. He thought, perhaps wisely, that the poor infatuated woman had done herself sufficient injury in her lifetime, and he hoped that in her grave, her errors might be buried. The fame of Swift, the whole of this strange story, and the publication of 'Cadenus and Vanessa,' have, however, preserved the remembrance of such a tale as was never before presented to the world. A copy of Vanessa's letters remained, however, in the possession of Judge Marshall, and the substance of many of them is interwoven in the interesting narrative of Swift's life by Sir Walter Scott.

After a separation of two months, Stella and the Dean met again, and were reconciled, and remained so until her death.

'The mind,' says Sir Walter Scott, 'pauses on this mysterious story with an anxious wish to ascertain its secret causes.' Years have elapsed even since those words were written, by one whose moral conclusions were so invariably correct, whose feeling for women was so generous and chivalric, and whose compassionate heart was as large as his genius was great. But time has done nothing to explain a mystery which will never be solved on this side the grave.

To Stella, Swift had written of his attachment in these half-offensive terms:—

> 'Thou, Stella, wert no longer young,
> When first for thee my harp I strung,
> Without one word of Cupid's darts,
> Of killing eyes, or bleeding hearts;
> With friendship and esteem possest,
> I ne'er admitted love a guest.'

This farce, this pretence of mere friendship, tragic in its effects, was performed till Stella was in her grave. When, in 1726, Swift was in England immersed in the agitating politics of the day, it was announced to him that Mrs. Johnson was in a rapid decline. To Dr. Stopford, who imparted

the news, Swift wrote of Stella as of an old, esteemed friend, or rather, one of two friends—Mrs. Dingley, one of the commonplace expletives in society, being named as equal in his affections with the tender, gifted Stella. But it is consolatory, whatever he thought proper to say to Dr. Stopford, to read the following passages in Swift's letter to his intimate friend Dr. Sheridan:—

'The account you give me is nothing but what I have for some time expected with the utmost agonies. I look upon this as the greatest event that can ever happen to me; but all my preparations will not suffice to make me bear it like a philosopher, nor altogether like a Christian. Judge in what a temper of mind I write this. The very time I am writing I conclude the fairest soul in the world hath left its body. I have been long weary of the world, and shall for my small remainder of days, be weary of life, having for ever lost that conversation which only could make it tolerable.'

On his return to Ireland, Swift was hailed with all the honours that the author of the 'Drapier letters' had been thought to merit. The bells of the churches rang a merry peal, and a sort of triumphant procession accompanied the Dean from the shore to his own house. He found Stella recovering, but the blow was only delayed.

Swift was again in England during the October of that year, when he again heard that the life of Mrs. Johnson, as she was still called to the last, was drawing to a close; he entreated Mr. Worrall, with whom, as it were, he boarded in the deanery, to take care that the sinking invalid should *not* die at the deanery, which Mrs. Dingley and Stella always occupied during his absence. Yet he spoke of her as 'that person for whose sake only life was worth preserving.' Accordingly Stella removed before his return. She had then been six months in a deep decline, kept alive only by care, and her sufferings were soon for ever to be closed in death.

Various accounts have been given of the last scenes be-

tween Stella and Swift; but the following narrative is believed by Scott to be authentic, and it seems to offer some notion that Swift's heart relented at last to his expiring friend, and wife. It was imparted to Mr. Theophilus Swift by Mrs. Whiteway:—

'When Stella was in her last weak state, and one day had come in a chair to the deanery, she was with difficulty brought into the parlour. The Dean had prepared some mulled wine, and kept it by the fire for her refreshment. After tasting it, she became very faint, but having recovered a little by degrees, when her breath (for she was asthmatic) was allowed her, she desired to lie down. She was carried upstairs to a bed; the Dean, sitting by her, held her hand, and addressed her in the most affectionate manner. She drooped, however, very much. Mrs. Whiteway was the only third person present. After a while her politeness induced her to withdraw to the adjoining room; but it was necessary, on account of air, that the door should not be closed; it was half-shut—the rooms were close adjoining. Mrs. Whiteway had too much honour to listen, but could not avoid observing that the Dean and Mrs. Johnson conversed together in a low tone. The latter, indeed, was too weak to raise her voice. Mrs. Whiteway paid no attention, having no idle curiosity, but, at length, she heard the Dean say, in an audible voice, "*Well, my dear, if you wish it, it shall be owned:*" to which Stella answered, with a sigh, "*It is too late.*"'

The word *marriage* was not uttered; but there is no doubt that was the secret to be owned.

Stella lingered three months after Swift's return to Ireland. On the 28th of January, 1727-8, at eight o'clock at night, she was removed from a world of trial to that region where there 'shall be no more sighing—no more sorrow.'

Swift had suffered agonies during her last illness. When he first heard of it in England, he left Pope's villa, at Twickenham, where he was visiting, and retired to a small lodging;

there to bear the blow. When another letter came he kept it an hour in his pocket before he could nerve himself for the shock of opening it. His usual attacks of giddiness and deafness recurred fearfully. After Stella's death his life became more retired, his temper more austere; he avoided his friends, he discontinued his public days. Half his life went with that of one over whose pilgrimage he had cast a shadow of perplexity, of care, of doubt. So true is it that neglected or outraged duties and wounded affections will be avenged: and that there is a consoling and protecting Providence over the weak and good, which comforts them in life, and vindicates them when dead. Stella, in middle life—for she was only forty-three when she died—expired placidly, surrounded by those dear to her. Swift survived, not only to suffer all the pangs of fruitless remorse, but to experience agonizing bodily pain, and to sink, unloved, unmourned into a grave, the darkness of which was to him prefaced by the dreariest mental gloom.

CHAPTER VIII.

SWIFT'S WORKS AND PRIVATE LIFE. — HIS FIRST WORKS SUPPOSED TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF HIS SUBSEQUENT FORTUNES.—HIS 'PINDARIC ODES.'—ANECDOTE OF DRYDEN. — HIS POLITICAL WORKS.— ANECDOTE OF LORD CARTERET. — SWIFT'S 'GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.'— HIS DEATH. — GAY; HIS ORIGIN. — HIS CONNECTION WITH THE SOUTH SEA SCHEME. — HIS FABLES. — HIS 'BEGGAR'S OPERA.' — HIS FRIENDSHIP FOR POPE. — POPE'S 'RAPE OF THE LOCK.' — EXTRACTS.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEAN SWIFT, like most successful men in every age, was well known to a circle of literati as a clever and original writer previously to the period when he came before the public as an author. Even in 1691, when he could only have been twenty-four years of age, he announced to his friend, Mr. Kendal, 'that he had written and burned and written again upon all manner of subjects, more than perhaps any man in England.' He was acquainted with Cowley and other men of letters. His first printed work was allowed to be a masterpiece; it was political, and entitled 'A Discourse upon the Contests and Dissentions between the Nobles and Commons in Athens and Rome.' This book, it is said, laid the foundation of his fortune as a political writer.

At Oxford, Swift produced his first verses. They were written in a period of leisure, when he went up to take his Master's degree, and the poems are symptomatic of the place, being a version of Horace, Book II., Ode 18, and beginning:

> 'Tis true, my cottage, mean and low,
> Not built for grandeur, but for ease;
> No ivory cornices can show,
> Nor ceilings rough with gold displays.'

His 'Pindaric Odes' were afterwards published, and were

a failure. His friends, Sir William and Lady Temple, were ardent admirers of Cowley, and pressed upon Swift the expediency of adopting the metaphysical style of poetry in imitation of that mistaken genius. A little sincerity on the part of Dryden saved Swift from a life of mortification; the two authors were related to each other by the marriage of Swift's grandfather with Mistress Elizabeth Dryden, the poet's aunt. Dryden dared, therefore, to be honest. When Swift showed him some of his high flights in the style of Cowley, glorious John simply remarked: 'Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet,' and Swift abandoned the Muse, and had the good fortune to discover the true vein in which the ore of his fertile genius was concealed. Satire was indeed natural to him; and he soon showed the world in what perfection he could lash its failings, and expose its foibles. We have already referred to his 'Tale of a Tub,' which was one of his earliest works. It was strictly anonymous; nevertheless, Swift, when told that it was ascribed to his cousin Thomas Swift, who published a key to it, expressed great indignation, 'and said he should be very happy to see how far the impudence of a dunce could go.'

It was during the close of his career that he unconsciously revealed the authorship to Mrs. Whiteway, his relative and friend. She observed him looking over the 'Tale of a Tub,' when, suddenly, he let the book drop, and heard him mutter, as if unconscious of her presence, 'Good heavens! what a genius I had when I wrote that book!' Mrs. Whiteway then begged for the book, which he refused, but on her birthday he presented it to her, inscribed,—'From her affectionate cousin.' 'I wish, sir,' said Mrs. Whiteway, 'you had said from the author.' The Dean bowed and smiled, and then replied with a significant smile, 'No, I thank you.'

We find him, at one time, meditating the publication of a 'Book of Miscellanies.' It was interrupted by the death of

his mother, after a long illness. 'I have now,' he exclaimed, 'lost my barrier between me and death. God grant I may live to be as well prepared for it as I confidently believe her to have been! If the way to heaven be through piety, truth, justice, and charity she is there.'

The 'Whig Examiner,' projected in order to support Harley's administration; the 'Public Spirit of the Whigs;' his 'History of the Peace of Utrecht;' his 'Last Four Years of the Reign of Queen Anne,' are all connected with the politics of the day, as well as his famous 'Letters in the Character of a Draper.' An amusing anecdote is told of Swift, when, after the publication of the fourth letter of a Draper, he paid his respects to Lord Carteret, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Being kept waiting a long time, he wrote on the window-pane of the chamber of audience these lines:—

> 'My very good lord, 'tis a very bad task
> For a man to wait here, who has nothing to ask.'

Lord Carteret to this wrote a reply:—

> 'My very good Dean, there are few who come here
> But have something to ask, or something to fear.'

Another time, when Lord Carteret was puzzled by some of Swift's wishes, or suggestions, he exclaimed: 'What in the name of heaven do you do here? Get back to your own country, and send us our boobies here again.'

His 'Travels of Gulliver' were written to give expression to his disappointment at the coldness of Queen Caroline to his hopes of preferment, and to portray, under the most ingenious frame-work ever employed, the bitter feelings of a mind which was becoming hourly more and more misanthropic. To Pope, who rejoiced at a projected visit on the part of the Dean to England, he wrote regarding the scheme and purport of his travels.

'Gulliver's Travels' were once pronounced by a great authority, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, to be the worst book

—that is, the most pernicious—although one of the cleverest in our language. Yet it is to 'Gulliver's Travels' that Swift owes, in a great measure, his permanent existence as an author, for whilst 'Gulliver' is still read with avidity, the 'Tale of a Tub' and the 'Battle of the Books' are almost forgotten.

Cardinal Polignac, who knew Swift, truly said of him, '*Qu'il avait l'esprit createur.*' He possessed, as Sir Walter Scott remarks, the wonderful power of so embodying and imaging forth the shadowy tribes of mind, 'that the fiction of the imagination is received by the reader as if it were truth.' He could adopt and sustain a fictitious character under every circumstance. Like Defoe, he availed himself of the agency of small facts in his personal narrative. Minute incidents related in an autobiography always impress us with a conviction of truth, and Swift's large and intimate communications with the world had stored his mind with innumerable facts which he, who had looked so deeply into the human heart, could refer to the right source, analyse, and place them before his reader with inimitable skill.

'Gulliver's Travels' were written, as Lord Orrery suggests, whilst Swift's mind was embittered by the death of Queen Anne and the disgrace of Harley. By Lord Orrery and by all rightly-thinking people, the seventh chapter in the voyage to Brobdignag, in which Swift indulges in a strain of raillery on the structure of the human frame, is highly reprehensible; and his lordship even ascribes the subsequent lunacy of Swift as a judgment on the man who could so abuse the great powers entrusted to him as to write such a passage. Swift thought satire light and frivolous unless it assumed the form almost of libel. We cannot assent to the opinion that in all he wrote he had a design to reform human nature. He was no philanthropist, and his bitter, brilliant satires were the outpourings of a selfish, ambitious mind. Nothing was sanctified to Swift. Former friendships, old

kindnesses, respect to the merits of those who differ, are bonds which restrain ordinary men from literary as well as from personal violence to those who offend them; but Swift revelled in the agonies of those whom he hated, either in his red-hot party zeal, or in his anguish of disappointment; and in the secure retreat of the anonymous, enjoyed their throes.

What a strange scene must it have been at the court of George the Second when Lord Hervey revealed to Queen Caroline and to her stolid consort the secret of the 'Rhapsody.' Swift, in 1733, had composed the 'Rhapsody,' in which, in a tone of irony, he eulogized these personages and their offspring, and the piece of satire was so inimitably done that he received, as he told Dr. King, from the court itself a message of thanks.

But Lord Hervey explained to Queen Caroline 'the use and power of the irony.' As a foreigner it was very natural that she should not have comprehended that of which every one else perfectly perceived the purport. Of course the Dean was never forgiven. This was in 1733, after the death of Stella, when he, Swift, began heartily to hate the world which he had before despised.

For his fugitive pieces he merits, as a clergyman, much reprobation. As usual, the excuse for their indelicacy is the state of manners in his time. Certain it is that we cannot judge of that day by our own. The reign of George the First was scarcely more pure, and certainly much less agreeable, than that of Charles the Second, and the tone of ordinary conversation, which that most agreeable monarch of the Stuart line is accused of having corrupted, was still coarse to a degree. But, the fact is, we accuse Charles the Second unjustly, for until a very late date, the standard of propriety in England has always been that which is now in existence among the lower class of society. The days when at a later period every young lady thought it became her to enter a party

with Richardson's 'Pamela' over her arm, as the most moral and virtuous book she could display, must have been very different to our own, when it is exactly the work to put out of the way of young people.

We owe much of the improvement of the moral sense to Queen Charlotte, consort of George the Third. Since her time, with a brief interval—the reign of George the Fourth—it has been gradually improving in England. Queen Adelaide did much to refine the court, and consequently the whole English aristocracy. Queen Victoria has effected infinitely more. We are less polite, perhaps less useful, than our great-grandmothers, but we are infinitely more innocent and decent. Were they alive, we must send young ladies out of the room on many occasions, we apprehend, in the course of ordinary conversation in order to escape being shocked.

Swift's fugitive pieces were rarely written with a view to publication. He read them to his friends, and gave copies away, and these got surreptitiously into print. Among them are the 'Ladies' Dressing-room,' 'Chloe,' and others, written mostly after the death of Stella, and when the mind of the lonely author—for he was henceforth lonely in heart—was verging to insanity, one of the most hideous features of which is the disposition to cherish disgusting objects of thought. It is hinted by Spence, alluding to the Dean's supposed imitation of Rabelais in his anecdotes, that Swift rather led the way than received lessons in the coarseness so rankly practised by the witty Frenchman.*

One cannot but regret that Swift's homely, inoffensive fugitive pieces are not collected separately from his works. His happy turns in his numerous lines upon maid servants, his Sue, his Betty, and others, are generally quoted, and may, at least, prove that what that class are now they were, in principle, then, though manners are changed. But better

* Scott.

specimens of Swift's humorous style are to be found, we think, in the following pieces:—

'AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF DEMAR THE USURER, WHO DIED ON THE 6TH OF JULY, 1720.

'Know all men, by these presents, Death the tamer,
By mortgage hath secured the corpse of Demar;
Nor can four hundred thousand sterling pound
Redeem him from his prison underground.'

'He that could once have half a kingdom bought,
In half a minute is not worth a groat;
His coffers from the coffin could not save,
Nor all his interest keep him from the grave,
A golden monument would not be right,
Because we wish the earth upon him light.
O London Tavern! thou hast lost a friend,
Though in thy walls he ne'er did farthing spend;
He touched the pence, when others touched the pot,
The hand that signed the mortgage paid the shot.'

'He who so long was current, 'twould be strange
If he should now be cried down since his change,
The sexton shall green sods on thee bestow,
Alas! the sexton is thy banker now!
A dismal banker must that banker be,
Who gives no bills but of mortality.'

The description of Delville, where Dr. Delany lived, is not only admirable in itself, but curious as a picture of the scene where the Dean's austere face, and Stella's soft and pensive countenance were often to be seen.

'DR. DELANY'S VILLA.

'Would you that Delville I describe
Believe me, sir, I will not gibe;
For who would be satirical
Upon a thing so very small?
You scarce upon the borders enter
Before you're at the very centre.
A single crow can make it night
When o'er your farm she takes her flight:
Yet, in this narrow compass, we
Observe a vast variety:

Both walks, walls, meadows, and parterres,
Windows, and doors, and rooms, and stairs,
And hills, and dales, and woods, and fields,
And hay, and grass, and corn, it yields;
All to your haggard brought so cheap in,
Without the mowing, or the reaping.
A razor, though to say't I'm loth,
Would shave you and your meadows both.
Though small the farm, yet there's a house
Full large to entertain a mouse;
But where a rat is dreaded more
Than savage Caledonian boar,
For, if it's enter'd by a rat
There is no room to bring a cat.
A little riv'let seems to steal
Down through a thing you call a vale,
Like tears adown a wrinkl'd cheek,
Like rain along a blade of leek;
And this you call your sweet meander,
Which might be suck'd up by a gander,
Could he but force his nether bill
To scoop the channel of the rill.
Next come I to your kitchen garden,
Where one poor mouse would fare but hard in;
And round this garden is a walk
No longer than a tailor's chalk;
Thus I compare what space is in it,
A snail creeps round it, in a minute;
One lettuce makes a shift to squeeze
Up through a tuft you call your trees.
And, once a year, a single rose
Peeps from the bud, but never blows;
In vain, then, you expect its bloom,
It cannot blow for want of room.
In short, in all your boasted seat,
There's nothing but yourself that's great.'

One of the most witty of Swift's minor productions is 'A Dialogue between a Member of Parliament and his Servant,' imitated from Horace, and first published in 1752. It commences thus:—

'SERVANT: Long have I heard your fav'rite theme
A general reformation scheme,

To keep the poor from every sin ;
But now I have——

'MEMBER : What, John, are you too turned projector ?
Come, then, for once I'll hear your lecture.'

ɜ argument is then begun, and the servant, who has, of rse, the best of it, plainly proves that the vices of the 'er are but a transcript of the higher classes.

'Can it be deem'd a shame or sin
To pawn my livery for gin ;
While bonds and mortgages at White's
Shall raise your fame with Arthur's knights?
Those worthies seem to see no shame in,
Nor strive to pass a slur on gaming.'

But perhaps the most amusing are his lines 'On the Death Dr. Swift,' occasioned by reading the following maxim in chefoucault :—'*Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis nous uvons toujours quelque chose qui ne nous déplaît pas.*' We ve only space for a small portion of this poem.

'As Rochefoucault his maxims drew
From nature, I believe them true,
They argue no corrupted mind in him,
The fault is in mankind.'

'We all behold with envious eyes
Our equals rais'd above our size,
Who would not at a crowded show
Stand high himself, keep others low?'

'The time is not remote, when I
Must, by the course of nature, die ;
When, I foresee, my special friends
Will try to find their private ends;
And, though 'tis hardly understood
Which way my death can do them good,
Yet thus, methinks, I hear them speak :
"See how the Dean begins to break ;
Poor gentleman, he droops apace,
You plainly find it in his face.
That old vertigo in his head
Will never leave him till he's dead,

Besides, his memory decays;
He recollects not what he says;
He cannot call his friends to mind,
Forgets the place where last he din'd;
Plies you with stories o'er and o'er:
He told them fifty times before."'

'And then their tenderness appears
By adding largely to my years—
"He's older than he would be reckon'd,
And well remembers Charles the Second.
He hardly drinks a pint of wine,
And that I doubt is no good sign;
His stomach, too, begins to fail,
Last year we thought him strong and hale;
But now he's quite another thing,
I wish he may hold out till Spring."'

In the decline of life, Swift lived in that solitude of the heart which falls on him who has once known perfect congeniality in love or friendship with intense force. Bulwer, who has written some sentences which indelibly impress themselves on the memory, speaks of one who bears great mental misery, 'like a man who had never known sympathy.' This was not Swift's case: his sympathies were in the tomb. No Stella, now, to grace every friendly meeting, by always saying as she did, 'the best thing said,' even, as Lord Orrery tells us, 'in the midst of persons of the greatest understanding in the kingdom.' No Stella to write birthday verses to the isolated being whom her death left for ever a mourner. Her wish, as expressed in the following lines, was not indeed fulfilled:—

'Long be the day that gave you birth,
Sacred to friendship, wit, and mirth;
Late dying, may you cast a shred
Of your rich mantle o'er my head;
To bear with dignity my sorrow,
One day alone;—then die to-morrow.'

Happily Stella did not foresee the terrible fate of him to whom in truly poetic verses this gifted and beautiful woman

had breathed forth the tender wish of her too constant heart.

Swift survived her eighteen years—and until nine years after her death, his great intellect was in its full vigour. One day, as he was writing a satire on the Irish Parliament, which he called the '*Legion Club*,' he was seized with a fit of giddiness, from the effects of which he never recovered. His temper became fretful, his memory declined: he grew at length weary of life. Early in his career, Swift had predicted this dreary termination of his life to Dr. Young. Walking one day with Young a mile out of Dublin, the Dean stopped short. 'Perceiving,' Young relates, 'that he did not follow me, I went back and found him fixed as a statue and earnestly gazing upward at a noble elm which in its uppermost branches was much withered and decayed. Pointing to it, he said: "I shall be like that tree, I shall die at the top."' He had always expressed a mournful sense at the state of idiotcy and childishness to which some of the greatest men of his time were reduced. When he gave, as instances, Marlborough and Somers, it was always, Lord Orrery tells us, with a heavy sigh, and with gestures that showed extreme uneasiness, as if he felt an impulse of what was to happen to him before he died. Some one spoke in his presence of a fine old gentleman. 'What! sir,' cried the Dean, 'have you yet to learn that there is no such thing as a fine old gentleman? If the man you speak of had either a mind or body worth a farthing, they would have worn him out long ago.'

This remark, though specious, is very fallacious: for it is accepted as a fact by the professors of medical science, that the exercise of the mental powers is not only healthy, but *essential* to health, and that active and intellectual men of temperate habits not only live to a greater age than others, but have a longer capacity of enjoyment. We have notable instances in the present day of men of seventy and of eighty not only in the full vigour of intellect, but possessed of the

elastic spirits of youth and of the activity usually ascribed to middle age.

Swift's last years were watched over by his first cousin, Mrs. Whiteway, who protected him from several who would have taken advantage of his failing clearness of mind to impose on him. At times, his usual brilliancy flashed out, and his wit and humour outlived his other powers, until a year before his death. The last person that he knew was Mrs. Whiteway. After he ceased to recognize her, his fits of passion became so terrible that she could only call once or twice a week at the deanery to see him.

A touching letter that he wrote to her contained almost the last words that he ever penned. In this he said:—

'I can hardly understand one word I write. I am sure my days will be very few; few and miserable they must be.

'I am, for those few days,

'Yours entirely,

'J. SWIFT.'

It is consolatory to find that after a swelling which appeared on his face had subsided, Swift knew this kind friend once more, spoke to her and thanked her. During a whole year he continued perfectly silent; as he sat in his house, thus absorbed and stupefied, his birthday came round. Within the chamber where the poor lunatic sat, there was the deepest gloom; without, bonfires were being kindled and candles lighted up to celebrate the natal day of a man whom, since the Draper's letters, Irishmen regarded as a patriot. His housekeeper told him of these rejoicings: 'It is all folly; they had better let it alone,' he answered.

At last, by the merciful dispensation of a pitying Providence, he was released. The close of these years of frenzy and violence, and of that last period of silence, was peaceful. He died without a groan or convulsion. He had loved Ireland; he had once declined to quit it for preferment in England; he endeavoured to uphold her rights, and the warm-

hearted people mourned him, as if, says Sir Walter Scott (for whom the Scotch similarly mourned), 'he had been called away in the full career of his public services.' The drear interval of imbecility was forgotten; locks of hair were eagerly sought for, and his name was long loved and honoured among his adopted countrymen. His faults were those of private life, his virtues, public.'

Let us call up a brief remembrance of Swift's daily life, before we quit, with the reluctant consciousness of having done but an imperfect justice to his works and characteristics, the notice of this extraordinary man.

We see him issuing out of the deanery of St. Patrick's: his demeanour is imposing; his eyes, 'azure as the heaven's in youth,' had, until a very late period of his life, still great acuteness. He has risen early, yet is scrupulously clean, for his habits of nicety on that point amounted almost to monomania. His dress—more especially of his wig—was of the canonical style fashionable in days of clerical innovation. We learn that

'When Charles the First the sceptre bore,
Each grave divine, I trow,
A silken cap all sable wore,
With nine straight hairs below.

'The Restoration's jovial day
Chang'd with the men, the mode,
And orth'dox heads, in broad display
The flaxen buckle show'd.

'In Anna's reign, from general view
T' enormous flaxens fled,
And lo! perukes of milk-white hue
Succeeded in their stead.'

Provided,—and this was a rule never infringed,—with small coin in his pocket for all who begged, see the Dean walk forth, sometimes, if in the country, to look over his own farm lands, or those of friends, sometimes in the streets of Dublin. There, as he goes along, he sees a drayman, abusing his over-

loaded horse, and castigates him, dean as he is, with his whip; exclaiming at every stroke, 'Oh, that I were a captain of horse!' Or he stops an acquaintance, whom he addresses with a sort of blunt sternness. Or he loiters among the flower and fruit women, among whom he exercises a sort of police; he calls them by fancy names, such as Flora, Cancerina, or Stumpa nympha, and over them he has a sovereign dominion; as he passes near their booths, bowing as he goes along, for he is received as a sort of prince by the lower classes, who say they ought to subscribe forty shillings a year to keep him in hats; or he turns back to the deanery, where the populace who loved and believed in him so greatly, are standing to see the great eclipse which had been foretold. Tired of their noise, the Dean hesitates ere he enters, and thinks what he has to do. He summons the crier, and bids him make a proclamation that the eclipse was put off by command of the Dean of St. Patrick's—and the confiding mob instantly disperse.

It is dinner time. The table is spread plenteously though not luxuriously. At dinner the Dean, though full of wit and talking incessantly, has an eye for everything that happens. A servant had made, he observed on one occasion, 'fifteen different mistakes at dinner.' Then his conversation:—how could any one attempt to describe it?—yet one's imagination catches at a notion of what passes at that curious dinner-table, where a wonderful assemblage of friends, archbishops and bishops—side by side with curates, poets, and schoolmasters—all sat, unconscious that in their host's diary their names were marked with a *g*, an *i*, or an *u*, in proportion as the Dean considered them good, or indifferent, or ungrateful to himself.

Or suppose the Dean at church, where he goes twice a week, for he had revived that obsolete observance, to prayer. His voice is full and loud, and his expressive tones ring through the almost empty aisles. Yet *there* was a rest, an interval from the passions of that busy world in which he was

so deeply enthralled. He wrote nevertheless to Stella—more, it must be confessed from a hatred of cant, than from a disregard for religion—'I hate Lent, I hate formality and sour faces.'

Although we ought not to take this exclamation of Swift's to the letter, he must be said to have been more of a formalist than a Christian. He was one who never forgot an injury, nor forgave even the oldest friend an affront. He never employed his great and original genius in the service of faith, or of philanthropy. Pope was essentially a man of the world; but Pope's heart was at times lifted up, and his pen made available to express aspirations of the deepest devotion to his Maker. There have been many men of more outrageous moral character than Swift, who, on a calm review of their works, sincerely regretted the evil tendencies of their writings.

> 'Fontaine and Chaucer dying wish'd unwrote
> The sprightliest effort of their wanton thought.
> Sidney and Waller, brightest sons of fame,
> Condemn'd the charm of ages to the flame.'*

'Would to God,' Averroes exclaimed, regretting some libertine verses written in his youth, 'that I had been born old.' But Swift, who left a mass of impurity to vitiate ages still unborn, died without one sign of remorse. True Christianity is as pure as it is sublime—and one of the first lessons that genius ought to learn, one of the last it ought to treasure, is a sense of its deep, eternal responsibilities; greater far than those of wealth and position. Yet the simple, good, and loveable Gay the poet, was beloved by Swift, and died in bonds of friendship with him. To his character we now turn as a relief.

Pope's beautiful tribute recurs to our recollection as we write the name of Gay, so beloved by others of such a different stamp to himself.

* Young's 'Epistle to Authors.'

'Blest be the great for those they take away,
And those they left me, for they left me Gay.
Left me to see neglected genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb.
Of all thy blameless life, the sole return
My verse, and Queensb'ry weeping o'er thy urn.'

Tremaine Ward, in his story entitled, 'Sterling,' sets forth the evils of a young man's being, from early association with others, brought into society of rank above himself. His able, though unpopular, picture of a life wasted by a false position, may, in some respects, apply to Gay. Differing, however, in one respect from Tremaine Ward's hero, Gay was a man of ancient family; Gilbert le Gay, his ancestor, having been settled at Hampton-Gay, in Oxfordshire; but John Gay (the poet's parent) was poor, and the future author of the Fables was apprenticed to a silk-mercer in London.

He regarded his occupation with disgust, and, quitting it, lived among the young literati of the day, and commenced poet.

He had the good fortune to become acquainted with Pope, who was born in the same year as himself. Gay was probably of French origin; and certainly some of his characteristics were those displayed by our charming continental neighbours. He had their lively spirits, and their almost perennial youth. 'Gay,' Dean Swift used to say, 'was never designed by Providence to be more than two-and-twenty by his thoughtlessness and gullibility.' Gay was never known to be melancholy, except when he was poor; his spirits were the barometer of his purse, and when that was low he told others of it, as a Frenchman would do. We English bottle up our troubles, and when anything goes wrong, dread nothing so much as being pitied. The Frenchman, on the contrary, pours out his whole grief, and tells you how he has lived on *ten* sous a day, and claims that sympathy without which he cannot exist—and thus did Gay. Swift did not spare him for thus uttering his complaints. 'I never charged you,' he

wrote to him, 'for not talking, but the dubious state of your affairs in those days, was too much the theme.' It is so very easy for a man with a settled income to consider poverty as a misdemeanor, and its expression as an impertinence.

Afraid of small means, or of no means at all, Gay consented to take up his abode, in 1712, in the house of the Duchess of Monmouth, and to act as her secretary. And now Pope wrote to him with all the delicacy of nature that the 'little nightingale' really possessed. He put his residence with the Duchess in the genteelest point of view.

'I shall see you this winter,' he wrote, 'with much greater pleasure than I could the last; and I hope so much of your time as your attendance on the Duchess will allow you to spare to any friend, will not be thought lost to one, who is as much so as any man. I must also put you in mind, that though you are now secretary to this lady, you are secretary to nine other ladies, and are to write for them, sometimes, too.'

Gay, soon afterwards, was appointed to attend Lord Clarendon to Hanover; and on his return Pope hailed his approach in glowing terms:—

'Dear Mr. Gay,—Welcome to your native soil, welcome to your friends, thrice welcome to me! whether returned in glory, blessed with court interest, the love and familiarity of the great, and filled with agreeable hopes, or melancholy with dejection; contemplative of the change of fortune, and doubtful for the future; whether returned a triumphant Whig, or desponding Tory, equally all hail! equally beloved, and welcome to me. I know you will be an honest man, and an inoffensive one; incapable of being so much of either party, as to be good for nothing. Therefore, once more, whatever you are, or in whatsoever state you are, all hail!'

The friends were to be as happy together as if they were, indeed, only twenty-two. Pope had nearly finished his translation of Homer. They were to make merry together in

'much feasting;' and to feed among the lilies (by the 'lilies,' Pope meaning the ladies).

Gay now experienced all the ups and downs of a literary life. His genius was not of that original stamp which commands success. He failed on the stage, became depressed, and was taken by Pulteney, the minister, to Aix, to divert him from his vexation. Yet he was already in full favour with the court and Queen Caroline, who were present at his farce of 'What d'ye call it?' It was a tragic-comic pastoral farce—(one can quite account for its failure)—and certain Templars went on purpose to hiss it; but laughed so much, according to Gay's account, that they forgot that design. Two of the nights of representation were court nights, and the boxes were filled with the great, all in their court dresses: nothing, however, could save the play. No one, in fact, could understand whether they were to laugh or to cry, and a Mr. Cromwell, a deaf gentleman, seeing people laugh, was much concerned, as he understood that the plot of the piece was pathetic, and semi-tragical.

'Three Hours after Marriage,' another comedy, fared the same fate, and a climax was put to the whole by poor Gay's losing his little all in the South Sea bubble. Swift's inimitable lines on that infamous swindling transaction were probably written with the case of poor Gay full in his remembrance.

'There is a gulf where thousands fell,
Here all the bold adventurers came;
A narrow sound, though deep as hell,
'*Change Alley* is the dreadful name.

'Nine times a day it ebbs and flows,
Yet he that on the surface lies,
Without a pilot, seldom knows
The time it falls, or when 'twill rise.

'While some build castles in the air,
Directors build them in the seas,
Subscribers plainly see them there,
For fools will see, as wise men please.'

The account of Pope and Fenton and of their friendship for the thoughtless Gay,

'In wit a man, simplicity a child,'

is quite touching.

Gay had the ill-luck to be possessed of as much original stock in the South Sea Scheme as represented the fictitious property of ten thousand pounds. Pope and Fenton, enchanted at the transient rise of the stock, entreated Gay to sell—but he refused their advice with disdain—enormous profits were to be realized in thought. They then begged of him to sell as much as would secure an annuity of 100*l.* for life. 'You will be sure,' cried Fenton, 'in that case, of a clean shirt and a shoulder of mutton every day.' But Gay gave all this advice to the winds—he did more, he expected to reap a fortune, and he lived as if what he expected had really arrived.

The bubble burst, and he lost all—that *all* was the original thousand pounds which had been first invested, and which by a fiction originating in Change Alley had risen to ten. Gay recalled in bitterness a consultation of his friends, before this one small barque was stranded in that sea of speculation, in which the unwary fish for gold, and drown. Lord Oxford's steward had advised him to put that precious thousand pounds into the funds, and live upon the interest. Dr. Arbuthnot,—to trust it to Providence, and live on the principal. Pope,—to buy an annuity; Swift, the same. When Gay refused all these suggestions Swift, of whom he was greatly afraid, wrote to him, 'You are the most refractory, good-natured, honest man I ever knew.'

Like all open-hearted beings, however, Gay had 'troops of friends.' Pulteney, we have seen, had carried him off to Aix; and the next year he was invited by Lord Harcourt to his seat in Oxfordshire, Stanton Harcourt; here the poet experienced all the miseries of ennui. 'The only news,' he

wrote to Elijah Fenton, 'that you can expect to have from me here, is news from heaven, for I am quite out of the world, and there is scarce anything that can reach me, except the noise of thunder.'

He returned to London, and frequented the court of Queen Caroline, whom he had seen at Hanover. In an evil hour that princess persuaded him to write a set of fables for her son, William Duke of Cumberland, afterwards the 'Butcher' of Culloden. Works written to order are invariably tame; and Gay's fables are so moral and so tame that the rising generation have invariably neglected them. How William of Cumberland liked them, it is impossible to know. We can only answer for our wicked selves, in this degenerate day. Yet these fables were the most popular of Gay's works. We agree, nevertheless, with Warton, (in his 'Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope') that their fault is the ascribing to the different animals and objects introduced speeches and actions inconsistent with their several natures. 'An elephant,' he indignantly adds, 'can have nothing to do in a bookseller's shop.' Gay's second fable, 'The Lion, the Tiger, and the Traveller,' were by a curious coincidence, dedicated, most appropriately, 'to his Highness William Duke of Cumberland.'

'Accept, young Prince! the moral lay,
And in these tales mankind survey.
With early virtues plant your breast,
The specious arts of vice detest;
Princes, like beauties, from their youth
Are strangers to the voice of truth.
Learn to contemn all praise betimes,
For flattery is the nurse of crimes;
Friendship, by sweet reproof is shown
(A virtue never near a throne);
In courts such freedom must offend,
There none presumes to be a friend;
To those of your exalted station,
Each courtier is a dedication.'

Gay's fables are certainly far inferior to those of La Fontaine; which Dr. Warton thinks 'the most unrivalled book in the French language.'

It seems that Queen Caroline agreed with that opinion, for she offered Gay no better reward than a proposal of making him Gentleman Usher to the Princess Louisa: that post was declined; and Gay, in revenge it is stated, produced next year the 'Beggar's Opera.' Swift, in his verses to Dr. Delany, did not fail to point the moral of Gay's long and unrequited attendance on an ungrateful court.

> 'Thus Gay, the hare with many friends,
> Twice seven long years at court attends;
> Who under tales conveying truth,
> To virtue form'd a princely youth;
> Who paid his courtship with the crowd,
> As far as modish pride allow'd;
> Rejects a servile usher's place,
> And leaves St. James's in disgrace.'

The 'Beggar's Opera' was Gay's ruin. Its success was indeed unparalleled; it had a run of sixty-three nights—twenty-three more than Addison's 'Cato,' the most popular piece till then ever put on the modern English stage. Ladies went into society, flirting fans on which the favourite songs in the Beggar's Opera were printed, and the Italian Opera was for the time ruined. In Wales, Scotland, and Ireland it made its way. To add to its popularity, it was abused; and invectives from the pulpit were launched against the undoubted immorality of bringing pickpockets and highwaymen, and women of lost character, on the stage, as heroes and heroines.

During the ensuing year Gay, intoxicated with success, produced 'Polly,' a second part of the 'Beggar's Opera.' Down came the Lord Chamberlain's heavy hand upon it; it was prohibited; Gay was accused of being disaffected—a much greater crime, in those days, than being immoral—and court favour was lost for ever.

Pope and Swift talked loudly of the good *moral* influence of the 'Beggar's Opera;' but the best test of its pernicious tendency is that we could not now endure it on the stage. It was the parent of the comic opera, which Warton calls the 'most monstrous of all dramatic absurdities.'

In this emergency, Gay found friends, and the excellent Duke and Duchess of Queensberry begged him to make their house his residence. He accepted the offer, for he was precluded from a pension, we fear, by Addison, who, on his death-bed sent for Gay and uttered these words: 'I have much injured you, but, if I recover, I will endeavour to recompense you.' He was not permitted to act up to that intention.

The friends with whom Gay was henceforth domiciled were thoroughly good, and what is equally essential in unequal, or, indeed, in any friendships, perfectly well-bred. They behaved to Gay with the utmost delicacy; they treated him, and probably in the generosity of their hearts considered him, as an equal. They never allowed him to feel his dependence. Yet we agree with honest Joseph Warton, who cautions any man against forfeiting his independence to the great in the hope of happiness or ease.

Gay's errors were visited by a signal depression in his last years. The once merry bird, in his gilded cage, could chirp and sing no longer. Swift, whom Gay idolized, wrote to him in the strain of a father. Pope suggested to him to write some verses on the Hermitage Queen Caroline intended to build in Richmond Park. 'His friends,' he said, 'expected it from him.' But the gentle poet languished, and died; one of his letters to Pope is a beautiful tribute to the kindness that could not make him happy, and a warning against courts (but all courts are not like that of the Consort Caroline).

'DEAR MR. POPE,

'My melancholy increases, and every hour threatens me with some return of my distemper, nay, I think I may rather say I have it on me. Not the divine looks, the kind favours and expressions of the divine Duchess, who hereafter shall be in place of a queen to me, nay, she shall be my queen, nor the inexpressible goodness of the Duke can in the least cheer me. The drawing-room no more receives light from these two stars. There is now (what Milton says is in hell) darkness visible: O that I had never known what a court was! Dear Pope, what a barren soil (to me so) have I been striving to produce something out of! Why did I not take your advice, before my writing fables for the Duke, not to write them, or rather to write them for some young nobleman? It is my very hard fate, I must get nothing, write for them, or against them.'

Gay's last illness immediately assumed a hopeless character. Dr. Arbuthnot, who, with two other physicians, attended him, had from the first a conviction that it would be fatal. On the 4th of December, 1732, Gay died of an inflammatory fever, which carried him off in three days. Thus his life was ended, as it had chiefly been passed, among the great;—he died in Burlington House. He was buried in the aisle opposite to that where Chaucer's remains repose, and his epitaph was written by Pope. Careless in death, as in life, Gay left no will, and all that the South Sea had not swallowed up, came, as he had wished, to his widowed sister.

Before his last illness, Gay had asked Pope, whom, he said, 'I love as my own soul'—if a stone should mark his grave, to write on it these lines:—

> 'Life is a jest, and all things show it,
> I thought so once, but now I know it.'

'There is none like you, living or dead,' were Gay's last words to his ever kind friend. Pope wrote on his tomb the

well-known epitaph which ends with observing that his honour consisted not in being entombed among kings and heroes, but

> 'That the worthy and the good shall say,
> Striking their pensive bosoms, "Here lies Gay."'

Gay's best poem was his 'Trivia;' but his was rather the sort of genius that would suit an album, or an annual, or a monthly magazine, than such as would destine a man for immortality. 'He wrote,' remarks Dr. Warton, 'with neatness and terseness *æquali quâdam mediocritate*, but certainly without any elevation, frequently without any spirit.'

His 'Trivia' is curious as a humorous and graphic picture of that London life, which is so completely changed since the time of the Augustan poets.

Whilst Gay was thus languishing in disappointment, Pope had attained the climax of his reputation; and was also in the enjoyment of ease and competency.

That production of Pope's which comes decidedly under the head of 'Literature of Society,' is his 'Rape of the Lock;' and although his satires may also be comprehended under the same head, it is here impossible to do more than analyze the poem which arose out of the foibles of the world of fashion, and which satirizes most especially the customs and vagaries of that world, so differing in various ages in externals, so alike in all ages in essential characteristics. It is difficult in the present day to conceive that a serious feud could arise in the polite world from a gentleman's cutting off a favourite lock of a lady's hair. Yet the finest, as many critics have considered it, of our modern satires was written on this incident.

Among the descendants of that Sir William Petre, who figured in several state employments in the reign of Henry the Eighth, was Robert Lord Petre, eighth baron of that name; at the time of the 'Rape of the Lock' he was a bachelor.

Although the greater part of the large inheritance which he had received from his ancestors was derived from the spoil of the monasteries, this nobleman was still a Roman Catholic.

It was in a party of pleasure that the venial act was performed, on which Pope based his exquisite poem. Mistress Arabella Fermor, one of the family of the Earl of Pomfret, appears from Pope's description to have had all the loveliness which might attract a young man's admiration. The act, however, was haughtily resented, and parties ran so high in the exclusive sphere in which the belligerents moved, that Pope was asked by Mr. Caryl, who had been Master of the Horse to Mary of Modena, and who was himself an author, to write something to stop the quarrel. All the party were acquaintance of Pope's; the Fermor family, like that of Lord Petre, were then Catholics, so that Pope's intimacy gave him a sort of claim to quell the wrath which so slight an incident had produced.

The first sketch of the 'Rape of the Lock' was written in a fortnight, thus justifying Pope's remark: 'What I wrote fastest, always pleased most.' So great was the success of the poem, that, in the following year, Pope enriched it with the 'Machinery of the Sylphs,' the idea of which he borrowed from a French book, the 'Comte de Gabalis,' by the Abbé Villars; but the rest of the charming production is all Pope's own, and we cordially agree with Dr. Warton in pronouncing it to be 'the best satire extant.' It contains the truest and liveliest picture of modern life, and the 'subject is of a more elegant nature, as well as more artfully conducted, than that of any other heroi-comic poem.'

Pope had the advantage of being a man of the world, as well as a poet. He availed himself wisely of Boileau's advice:

'Que les vers ne soient pas votre éternel emploi.'

We can fancy the sparkle of his wonderful eyes, the musical

laugh, the terse expression, the formal gallantry, which were elicited by Mistress Fermor's virtuous indignation at a liberty taken with her tresses. For women were stately beings in those days; their hoops indicated their position; so far may ye come, no farther. Except in full dress they were never visible; a man might slip out a *double entendre*, and the pretty creatures put up their fans, and laughed behind them; but if he presumed to touch more than the tip of a fourth finger in handing a lady from one room to another, he was distanced by a rustle of the silk dress, and almost annihilated by the sweep of a train.

True, the formal kiss went round among family parties—ladies and gentlemen alike: but then it was so slight an observance: and performed in so rapid and respectful a manner that it scarcely discomposed a patch.

Thus Lord Petre's offence was grave. We have always wished, nevertheless, with all due horror of his crime, that it had been followed by marriage. But no, he married—perhaps from pique—during the heat of the controversy, and just when the sylphs and gnomes had made their *début*; and died, in the March of the following year, 1712-13, of small-pox, a posthumous son succeeding him. The country ought to raise a monument in Mayfair, for the act which produced Pope's poem.

'Say what strange motive, Goddess, could compel
A well-bred lord t' assault a gentle belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?
In tasks so bold can little men engage?
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?
Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day.
Now lapdogs gave themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake;
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,
And the pressed watch returned a silver sound.'

'he machinery of the sylphs in proper places has not the ıtest appearance, as Warton observes, of being awkwardly ;hed in, but seems to belong to the original plan of the n. Belinda is warned by the guardian sylph, upon the ıing of the poem, of some impending danger; but Ariel ifully and beautifully portrays the inhabitants of the air are charged with Belinda's safety:—

'Know, then, unnumbered spirits round thee fly,
The light militia of the lower sky;
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the box, and hover round the ring;
Think what an equipage thou hast in air,
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once enclosed in woman's beauteous mould,
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air.'

is description of Belinda at her toilet keeps up the ion of the invisible world around the lady. The sylphs still at their work:—

'The busy sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair;
Some fold the sleeve, while others plait the gown;
While Betty's praised for labours not her own.'

hen comes Belinda forth to join the party of pleasure on Thames:—

'Fair nymphs and well-dressed youths around her shone;
But every eye was fix't on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore,
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those.

'This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck,
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck;

Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains;
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey;
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.'

The party was wafted down to Hampton Court. Evening coming on:—

'Belinda, now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two advent'rous knights,
At ombre singly to decide their doom,
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.'

Then follows the famous game of ombre; next is the tea-table described; and then the Rape of the Lock is perpetrated. In vain is Belinda warned. In vain—

'Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair,
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair,
And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched the ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his power expir'd;
Resign'd to fate, and, with a sigh, retired.'

Among the less visible perfections of this poem are the parodies, we are told by Warton, on 'serious and solemn passages of Homer and Virgil.' What a mastery of language! What a perfection of memory and judgment must the man who composed this poem in a fortnight have possessed!

As Virgil in describing the death of Dido had prefaced it by omens, so is the 'Rape of the Lock' attended with suitable prodigies.

'Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell;
The tottering china shook without a wind.'

Still worse:—

'Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!'

The Lock itself is made a constellation with the hairs of Berenice.

'The sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleas'd, pursue its progress through the skies.'

Finally, after it becomes a constellation, these are its uses:—

'This the beau monde shall from the Mall survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray;
This the blest lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake;
This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes.
And hence the egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.'

The offended Arabella was married shortly afterwards; and Pope's letters to her on that occasion are esteemed a model of courtesy and delicate adulation. But nothing can be more elegant, as a tribute to the charms on which Arabella Fermor had set so much store, than the concluding lines of the 'Rape of the Lock.'

'Not all the tresses that fair head can boast
Shall draw such envy as the lock you lost;
For, after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die;
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust;
This lock the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.'

CHAPTER IX.

THE LETTER-WRITERS OF SOCIETY: LORD CHESTERFIELD; HIS LETTERS.—THOSE OF LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU; OF MRS. ELIZABETH MONTAGU; OF HORACE WALPOLE.—SAMUEL RICHARDSON; MAKES LETTERS THE VEHICLE OF FICTION; HIS TEA TABLE; HIS PAMELA, CLARISSA, AND SIR CHARLES GRANDISON. — RICHARDSON'S DEATH. — FIELDING, SMOLLETT, AND STERNE.—THEIR CHARACTERS AND WORKS.

CHAPTER IX.

'HE age succeeding that of the Augustan period may be istinguished as that of the 'Letter-writers of Society.' iterature, properly so styled, languished; the court was ll in all; and the court was not literary. Poetry fled the egion of those Hanoverian princes who could not appreciate er charms; Art, the progress of which has been so often lentified with that of poetry in our annals, was almost uppressed; and the larger ambition of a literary field being hus curbed, the most energetic spirits devoted themselves o correspondence. Every work of instruction, and many of musement, took the form of letters. Now letters were the efined occupation of the rich only. The poor, if even they ould write, never afforded the extravagance and luxury of loing so: the middle-classes regarded a letter as a severe abour; and, when completed, how was it to be transmitted? n some fortunate towns the post went out twice a week; n the generality of country places only once. All epistles f pressing importance were obliged to be sent by couriers, n royal fashion; and men were always attached to the reat houses of England to render that service. A letter, herefore, was written with care, and contained every posible description of intelligence, from a recipe for gooseerry-wine, to the birth or death of an heir apparent.

The 'Letters of Lord Chesterfield' had a special object; and, whatever exceptions may be taken to the spirit of the whole of that epistolary work, we owe much to his able, and, in his day, influential efforts. To appreciate them, we must reflect on the age in which, as it were, he addresses himself, in the person of his son, whom he was desirous to form into the model of a fine gentleman, to society in general. The fine gentleman of Chesterfield's day was not the fine gentleman of our time. His pretensions to fashion consisted in great splendour of attire, united to an extreme absence of cleanliness. His vices, more especially that which was then called gallantry, were to be paraded with his best coat. The young nobleman, or commoner, might drink and gamble, but not lose *caste;* but if he affected purity of manners, or sanctity, or lived retired from court, there was sure to be attached some stinging satire to his motives, either by his associates or by the press. Hence the very guarded way in which Chesterfield recommends *virtue;* and the great leaning which he evidently has to his son's becoming a gallant of the first water; and to his somewhat affecting the favour of married women, with hints that a well-chosen intrigue or two had its advantages. If the fashion of the day had authorized virtue, would Chesterfield have counselled vice? But, since he was forming, or trying to form, a hard block of granite not only into a living ornament of society, but into a diplomatist, he sanctions and recommends industry and application, and tells him that labour is the unavoidable fatigue of a necessary journey; and that 'the more hours in a day he travels, the sooner he will be at his journey's end.' The nobility of that day were, it is certain, generally carefully educated men.

In minor morals Chesterfield was the great benefactor of social life. What an age must it have been when, except during a few weeks at Bath, or Tunbridge, or Weymouth, or Scarborough, the great feature of the present day, the

cold bath, was out of use—if, indeed, it ever was so greatly in use in our country as in France! What the ill consequences of full dress, when ladies only had their befrizzled hair taken down and combed out once in three weeks! when they rouged, and enamelled, and powdered, and patched,—and did everything but wash—until there was scarcely an inch of nature left about their persons, nor such a thing as an honest dash of cold water hardly known! What an age it must have been, when it was necessary to point out that cleaning the teeth and nails 'was most recommendable!' Yet all this advice came from Lord Chesterfield, with an authority, as from a man of ancient family, who had lived at court all his English and foreign life, and was *le grand seigneur* of Mayfair. If similar injunctions were now so much as pointed at, by the kindest of parents to the most awkward of sons, would not an indignant burst of surprise check the sage counsel?

Admirable, indeed, are all those directions in conversation and demeanour from Chesterfield; yet, society changes; and a lady or gentleman formed on Chesterfield's model now, would be,—the one an infliction in the familiar form of a bore, the other a prig, to our present notions; but, in some points, the standard of good manners is ever the same. The vulgarity of interruption, of pedantry, of talking of one's *appetite,* of saying that one 'is very hot,' of all personal references, still shock us, though we know not why. Our minds intuitively submit to Chesterfield's doctrine, and we shrink from gentlemen who dilate on indigestion, or from ladies who describe their maladies—a delinquency to which women after middle age, when they give up pleasing, and live on sympathy, are peculiarly prone. Then, in the employment of time, and in general directions for study, Chesterfield's Letters are excellent; and could we wring out of the choice web which he has woven, certain impurities, we should still think it, as it was in old times, the book for a Christmas present to a son or nephew.

But this is impracticable. You cannot remodel Chesterfield: throughout almost every page, some trivial selfishness of character, some violation of sincerity, some entire ignoring of any high principle of religion, or even of honour, appears. Could we have known Chesterfield,—let us suppose that we did; that we knew that consummate address which made, we are told by Horace Walpole, a hideous face agreeable; that we had listened to that marvellous art of conversation, which rose into eloquence in Parliament;—had we so known him, and had these letters, whilst we were in daily communication with the man, appeared anonymously, should we not have fixed them on Chesterfield? I believe we should; they are so redolent of his character and of his times.

Next in order, during that century, come all the correspondents of the Suffolk *coterie;* and Lord and Lady Hervey shine conspicuously in epistles truly characteristic of each.

Lady Hervey's are the productions of a woman to whom, looking at it in a fashionable point of view, virtue and vice had become much the same thing, unless when they interfered with my 'Lord's' or her advancement, or disturbed the peace of her 'dear Lady Suffolk.' If we had never read Lord Hervey's Diary of the reign of George the Second, one might condemn Lady Hervey for this; but they were both inmates of that den of royal misery, and hot-bed of vice, Kensington Palace. They had become so inured to that vitiated atmosphere,—to King George's boasted sensuality, to Queen Caroline's unceasing craftiness and slipperiness of conscience,—that they hardly knew virtue when they met her. She was not recognizable to their senses; they *just* knew Propriety, her shadow, and that was all. Take away this vital defect, and Lady Hervey's letters are easy, pleasant, not *very* ill-natured, and expressed with liveliness almost amounting to talent.

Lord Hervey, for we put aside his poetical effusions, gave to our own day a present which, one may say, has enriched

the treasury of our social literature with some very bad coin. For years his Diary was buried; until, at last, the late Mr. Croker, on whose shoulders the mantle of the bitter satirist had fallen, exhumed it and gave it, slightly mangled, to the world.

His Lordship's Diary is very clever, very revolting, and, we fear, very true. At all events, it is the report of an anatomist who has made deep and daily search into the physiology of princes, princesses, statesmen, and courtiers. He has thoroughly dissected their hearts; and he knows every throb, and its consequence. He has left a picture such as no human skill could have invented nor conceived, and which we must therefore believe to be accurate; but it is told in such cold-blooded terms, it is so dark with the endless delineations of selfishness and turpitude, that we would willingly believe that 'Lady Fanny's' mind were diseased, had we not other proofs that the revelations are essentially veracious.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was coeval with the Hervey and Suffolk cliques, as well as with that which centered in Strawberry Hill.

One great charm of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters, is their being perfectly natural: but then, it is a shrewd, thinking, sensible woman who is natural, not an ordinary being. On whatever subject she touches, we see that she has the grandeur of mind to rise above art. Whether she wrangles, before marriage, with Mr. Wortley, or defends herself afterwards from the innumerable suspicions of that most querulous and fastidious of men; or whether she gives her first impressions of what is now, to us, so commonplace a theme as Rotterdam; and going slowly up the Rhine, tells us that Nimeguen is like Nottingham, and gives us her reasons; or whether, at Cologne, she writes word that she had wickedness enough to wish to steal Saint Ursula's pearl necklace, —'though, perhaps,' she adds, 'it was no wickedness at all, an image not being certainly one's neighbour;' or whether

she touches, in her description of Nuremberg, on the happiness of free towns, and runs off into a disquisition on sumptuary laws in dress, for which the great Fénelon had then, (in 1716) just declared,—she is always unaffected and sensible; her English is pure, her construction of sentences, judicious. When the subject rises, she rises with it; and although, in the state of ignorance of foreign travel then prevalent, she was often suspected of exaggeration, modern readers have acquitted her of that fault; and we believe now, what she herself declared to Lady Bristol, that her 'whole account was writ with plain sincerity of heart.'

Perhaps the cold felicity of Lady Mary Wortley's marriage, terminating in a civil indifference, caused her to turn to the improvement of her understanding to supply the wasted affections of her life. Her husband, who she declares loved her at first so passionately that he could scarcely bear to let any one see her but himself, consented to the separation of half a life-time. Her son was her sorrow,—sorrow! he was her misery and disgrace! Her young daughter became eventually her dearest friend, and the sole object of her life. There is no proof that she ever had any other object. During her travels, however, no means of information was ever lost by Lady Mary. When at Belgrade, she lodged with a principal Effendi, or scholar. She took an opportunity of learning the 'Mahomedan religion and morals, better than perhaps any Christian ever did.' She came therefore to Constantinople, educated, as it were, to understand everything, and with sufficient poetry in her to describe the glowing scenes she witnessed with Oriental vividness, yet sufficient good taste to know that truth is always much more effective than fiction.

There is one thing to be said relative to Lady Mary's letters: they were addressed to the intelligent Lady Bristol, the mother of Lord Hervey, and to Lady Pomfret. Amongst her female correspondents were well-informed women. Pope,

Congreve, 'Sister Mar'* (the Countess of Mar), were all persons who could appreciate her wittiest efforts, and whose curiosity to learn all her impressions must have been insatiable.

With regard to the indelicacy of Lady Mary's letters, no thinking person can exonerate her from having had a corrupted mind, whatever her conduct may or may not have been. Neither do we accept the late Lord Wharncliffe's excuse, that it was in accordance with the feeling of the times that Lady Mary indulged in *double entendre*, and in expressions neither to be written nor uttered by modest women.

There is no doubt but that the times gave great licence in that respect, but, if we read the correspondence of other women of high position, we do not find that they availed themselves of it. Lady Pomfret and Lady Hertford are eminently proper; Mrs. Montagu usually so; Miss Talbot, Mrs. Vesey, Mrs. Carter (to say nothing of Mrs. Chapone and Hannah More), are, in their letters, as correct as English women assuming to be ladies are in the present day. Lady Mary Wortley, on the contrary, without the *necessity* in many cases of writing on subjects forbidden, does so in the most indelicate manner, and her words often convey much more than, at first, we should venture to conceive. Thus her letters—brilliant, sensible, and useful as they are, delightful in style, full of gaiety, yet often breaking forth into sentiment,—ought not to be put in the hands of the young, until passages calculated to taint the purest thoughts—(and when the taint is once there, how difficult to exterminate!) until many erasures have effaced Lady Mary's allusions and *double entendres*. No amount of amusement will compensate for the introduction of one wrong thought into the hitherto pure mind of youth.

Very superior in moral tone, though greatly inferior in

* Lady M. W. Montagu's Works, vol. i. p. 301.

talent and in opportunities of description, are the letters of Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, 'the Queen of the Blues.' There is, however, no evidence of royalty in her merry, satirical, and girlish letters, full of country parties, her dear 'Duchess,' and papa's 'hyp.' But it is the mirth of a clever and well-instructed mind,—gay, but not frivolous, and endowed with a natural flow of humour. One can hardly identify the Elizabeth Robinson of Mount Morris and Sandleford Abbey, with the Mrs. Montagu of later days, blazing with diamonds, wrangling with Dr. Johnson, abhorred by Fanny Burney, and somewhat toadied by Dr. Beattie and Mrs. Carter.

Her descriptions of country life in the eighteenth century are valuable as records. What a picture that is of dull seclusion, where she relates how she is sent to a farm-house to avoid the small-pox; and she paints every object of the old grange so to the life, so that often and often, in walking about rural counties, one recognizes Mrs. Montagu's grange; and looking aloft, sees the very weathercock that had veered about with every change of government, down to the last William, and Protestant Mary.

As she grows older, Elizabeth Robinson no longer, but Mrs. Montagu, she falls into the grave reflections which time and sad experience force on us all. We esteem her more, but we read her less; and her letters no longer appertain to the 'Literature of Society,' but become moral and religious essays.

Lady Pomfret and Lady Hertford are so stately, sensible, and dull, that we can only dismiss their letters with the one reflection, that no wonder they have been so long out of print, and are now scarcely to be met with. Book-collectors, in the next century, may pick up a copy here and there as curiosities; but, in the present, no countesses can ever induce this irreverent generation to read what is dull, respectable, and tiresome.

But one evergreen still flourishes among all the garlands of flowers which Mudie hourly scatters in our path. Horace

Walpole is ours, and ours for ever. Who will ever cease now and then to dip into those numerous volumes, edited, and re-edited, and every now and then coming out with new notes and fresh portraits, and new prefaces and a new index? Horace, too, left his letters a legacy to *us*. Could he, wise and witty as he was, divine that we should be, *par excellence*, the most reading people in the world? Could he have guessed, in his seclusion at Strawberry Hill, that Thackeray would lecture on the Georges, and that Scott would bring the times of the Pretender before us bodily, so that a sudden overflow of Jacobitism deluged the whole land? Could Horace have foretold that Lord Stanhope's elegant history would be written, or that Hogg's Jacobite songs would be collected, or that Aytoun and Miss Strickland would ever meet and talk of 'over the water to Charlie?' In the days of Horace the word 'Jacobite' was a word of reproach, and could not be uttered by one boy to another without a blow or an outcry. Yet he seems to have foreseen that there were people who would read with throbbing hearts his calm, but thrilling narrative of Derwentwater's trial; of Kilmarnock's execution; of Balmerino's heroism; and Lord Lovat's perfidy, bad life, and valiant death.

But not as records only are the letters of Horace Walpole invaluable to us. It is true we have no other views of society like his, taken in photographic manner—every harsh line, every crooked feature doing its worst; but we could have done without them. After all, how Pigwiggin looked, or what Lady Townshend said, or what jewels Lady Carteret wore, could not now be of much moment. But he has made us familiar with our grandfathers: he has shown us where the strength and where the weakness of England lay. He has been insensibly an historian. The springs of action were, from his position as well as his powers of observation, revealed to him; his moral conclusions are generally correct, though he was himself hard, and, to our notions, not strictly moral:

though often his views are distorted, the colours which he uses are generally true. Governed as he was by small passions, he is tolerably accurate, nevertheless, in facts.

Never did any writer amuse one so much against one's will as Horace Walpole. It is true, his letters are not like letters; they are rather diaries than letters. He seems to think but little of his correspondents; but more of that world of scandal, strife, study, politics, and gallantry which is ever moving around his affected retreat at Strawberry Hill, than of absent friends, who are mere peg-tops for his letters to be hooked upon.

Letters were indeed the vehicle in that day, not only for observation, as in Horace Walpole's case; for history, as in that of Lord Lyttleton; for instruction, as in those of Fitzosborn; for religious education, as in those of Hannah More at a somewhat later period; but for the most harrowing narratives of fiction, as in the novels of Samuel Richardson.

Whilst Horace Walpole was beginning his sunshiny life, and hopping about, like a little humming-bird, from one gay bower to another,—bright in some lights, but an insignificant figure after all,—a powerful genius was cramped in poverty and cold: days never to be recalled were spent in a seven-years' apprenticeship to a printer, that printer being a man who grudged every hour to his apprentices that tended not to his profit. Such was the outset of Samuel Richardson, the *greatest* writer of modern fiction, if we rank, not by quantity, but by quality those who have been so engaged, that ever wrote an English novel.

Let us look at him, not as he was when he was on the ascent to fame, but on the table-land which his thrifty, prudent character rendered so secure, so pleasant a resting-place. He is seated around a tea-table at his villa at Parson's Green, surrounded by a circle of ladies; and among whom one gentleman alone appears. Richardson is, of course, the main figure of the scene. He is short and plump—say five feet

four inches high; his visage is smooth and round, and of a light-brown complexion; he has a lively grey eye, and perfect teeth, and is looking about sixty-five years of age. He wears a fair wig, a light cloth coat, all else beside black; his neck is short; and he bears about him the stamp of what he was—a man self-raised, self-educated, wonderfully acute, worthy,—and vulgar. Such was Samuel Richardson.

He is reading aloud to those admiring fair ones, who are *knotting* the while. One hand is in his bosom; the other rests on a cane, concealed beneath the skirts of his coat; he is leaning on it, good man, in case of tremors, and startings, and dizziness, to which he declares he is subject; for Richardson, though only fifty to the ladies and the public, is sixty-five at the least, at this era of his life, having first seen the light behind a joiner's workshop (his father's) in 1689. But, though he is not yet a widower (after being twice married), and is not again on his preferment, he is on the look-out for the admiration of the fair; and, as his quick eye glances on all around, there is not a turn or a peculiarity that escapes him, his observations beginning, as he tells us, at the very point of the toe, and going upward to the face and head.

There are no great names heard at that tea-table—scarcely literary ones; save that the two sisters of Henry Fielding are there, and Charlotte Lennox, the authoress of the 'Female Quixotte,' who comes in shabby and half starved; and to her the worthy host offers the best of his ever-hospitable board. The ladies are chiefly adoring neighbours, 'Highmores' and 'Duncombes,' and there is a 'Miss Mulso,' and a 'Miss Westcomb,' and other fair creatures in hoops and fardingales, innocent virgins of thirty-five or more, who are happy in being permitted to call Richardson 'their adopted father.'

He is reading to them 'Sir Charles Grandison;' and, as he reads, he weeps: Clementina is at all events avenged

that he, who invented her miseries, sheds tears over them; and the ladies all take out their handkerchiefs, of course.

The old gentleman present is the most affected by the reading of any. Worn-out, tawdry, with a shabby fine laced coat, and dirty tattered ruffles, taking snuff vehemently, and applauding as if he were in the stage-box one moment, weeping as if he were on the stage the next,—behold Colley Cibber; now in the very yellowest and searest of the leaf, to which old age is likened; still writing, still acting his own plays, and still frequenting the table of Samuel Richardson, to eat at another man's expense, and to pay back the coin of flattery. But he is Poet Laureate; and that office imposes on the worthy, but somewhat tuft-hunting Samuel Richardson.

As the great novelist reads, he is so powerfully affected that he becomes almost hysterical. A glass of water is placed near him; he takes it, but his hand trembles as he carries it to his lips; for a youth of hard work—still more, perhaps, an age of imaginative creations—have enfeebled the stout little author. He puts aside his manuscript, and begins to talk of what was the object next to his heart—himself.

He tells his idolaters—and a blaze of bright eyes are fixed on him as he speaks—how, at school, five of the boys used to delight to have him out for a walk to tell them tales, and how one of them wanted him to make a story on the ballad of 'Tommy Potts;' and how half a dozen young admirers, his neighbours, used to get him to read to them, and afterwards to write their love-letters for them; and all the wishes, hopes, and scruples of these faithful hearts were thus disclosed him: and how, a boy of thirteen, he became the confidant of all, unknown to each other. Once, when a letter had arrived, in reply to one of his inditing from a lover to his mistress, he asked, he tells the party, 'how he was to answer it?' 'I cannot tell you what to write,' was the girl's answer (her heart on her lips), 'you cannot write *too* kindly.'

Then he looks back, as other great men are prone to do, on his very difficulties with satisfaction. He, the Master of the Stationers' Company as he now was; he, the half-printer to the king,—he could afford to relate how he used to sit up at nights reading; and how he used to buy his own candle himself, not to put his master to expense; and how he married his master's daughter for his first wife; and how he had taken his printing-house in Salisbury Court,—and there he was; and he looks around him with great self-gratulation.

Another time, see him sitting before his door, and, like an old patriarch, offering hospitality to any passer-by whom he knew, even to shabby and distressed authors, who are sure to get a guinea from him before they leave him: and he was the same to all, whether, says Mrs. Barbauld 'they brought with them the means of relieving their host, or only required his notice, or that of his family.'

Only occasionally that want of *tact*, which so often oozes out in men of originally low station, was betrayed. Richardson and Fielding were at a kind of literary variance; yet the Miss Fieldings were frequently at Parson's Green.

The air of pity and patronage which Richardson adopted towards Fielding, proceeded from jealousy; and it is to the credit of Fielding that he neither retorted nor resented the offensive comments, but, in the 'Jacobite' journal, highly extolled the great merits of 'Clarissa.'

It was an accident that first disclosed to Richardson the true character of his own genius, and that determined its direction.

A gentleman with whom he corresponded was in the habit, on putting up at any country inn during his summer travels, of inquiring into the private history of families around. On one occasion, his curiosity was gratified by a recital of the story on which 'Pamela' has been founded. The narrative so interested the traveller that he stayed over Sunday to see

the happy pair—Pamela and her husband, once her master, at church. 'He never,' he declared, 'saw a lovelier woman, nor a happier pair;' and this incident was the foundation of Richardson's first novel.

He wrote it in two months; beginning it on the 10th of November 1739, and finishing it on the 10th of January 1740. It would perhaps never have been completed, had not his wife, and a young lady who was visiting her, encouraged his efforts by listening to it as he went on, and by coming into his little closet every night with, 'Have you any more of Pamela to read to us, Mr. R.?' And thus, with Molière's old woman in his head, Richardson proceeded with his work.

Aware of the value of puffing, the worthy bookseller wrote what he allows himself to be a very impudent preface; and 'knowing that the judgment of nine in ten of readers were but in hanging sleeves,' struck a bold stroke in the character of editor, and referred to the approbation of the letters—for 'Pamela' was in letters—which former friends and listeners had expressed.

'Pamela' made a powerful sensation. It was the first English novel that attempted to paint nature and ordinary life: hitherto the French style of romance had been the only works of fiction fashionable in England; but here was a simple tale; the colouring of the characters it exhibited was faithful and natural, and the incidents not improbable. We cannot, however, agree to the received opinion of the day, that Pamela 'would do more good than twenty sermons;' on the contrary, we think the conduct of Mr. B., the hero, is not such as to merit the happiness he enjoyed, and there are scenes and details in the work which are highly indelicate, and therefore likely to be injurious to most readers.

Eight years after the publication of 'Pamela,' appeared the immortal novel of 'Clarissa.' It is again female innocence and heroism that are delineated with a mastery of

language and description such as no pen has ever surpassed.

Nothing can exceed the finished manner in which every personage of this splendid fiction is placed before the reader. The bashaw-father; the weak, amiable, depressed mother; the brutish brother; the sister who could never forgive the slight to her own attractions; the uncles; the hideous suitor whom her family wished Clarissa to marry; even the maid-servant —nay more, even the dead grandfather,—are your very intimate acquaintance. They remind one of those quaint old cabinet pictures, family portraits, which we see hung about near one grand painting—a Correggio, perhaps, or a Raphael—delineating the purest and most perfect form of female loveliness. The portraits are out of keeping with this gem of the collection; they are too inferior even to act as foils: and so it is that we wonder how such a being as Clarissa could have been reared amid persons so thoroughly common-minded as the generality of her kinsfolk; so above that world which was all in all to them, and to rise in which was the great aim of their existence.

This fearful worldliness is one cause—indeed the main cause, of all Clarissa's sufferings: for had her family been her protectors, instead of her persecutors, no libertine in the world could have hunted her, as Lovelace did, to the death.

Another cause was the one sole weakness of poor Clarissa's heart. Without absolutely loving Lovelace, she excuses him. She allowed herself to believe, as inexperienced young women do, that generosity to servants and tenants, and other popular qualities, may indicate something to hope in the character of an avowed and confirmed profligate. This was her error; this, her ruin. Influenced by this notion, she corresponds with Lovelace, and she meets him. She dwells on the great delicacy and respect of his conduct during that first fatal interview. We fancy, as we read that letter, that we see the dark cloud in the distance, as when in Alpine scenes, by the

side of some hill-encircled hut, we can distinguish afar off the slight streak in the heavens which forebodes that coming hurricane which will bend the trees to the very earth. We feel too, sensibly, that imprudence will in this world meet with punishment; sin, in the next.

A few years since, we might have pronounced the character of Lovelace to be too utterly abandoned for reality. But if in our own times such hideous forms of depravity have been unveiled, how can we dare to assert that men so utterly debased may not have justified Richardson's picture? Rochester, Wharton, Lord Baltimore, might each have sat for his model. Fiction is allowed to choose the strongest instances of moral turpitude for its agents: and without a Lovelace we could never have had a Clarissa.

'Clarissa' was published in parts; and it was whilst her fate seemed to be hanging in the balance of Richardson's judgment, that Lady Bradshaigh, the wife of Sir Roger Bradshaigh of Haigh, in Lancashire, wrote to him under a feigned name. Curiosity on both sides grew during the correspondence: and Richardson was asked by Lady Bradshaigh to walk in the park at a certain hour, and to send a personal description of himself, that his unknown correspondent might distinguish him among the crowd.

For a time Richardson's walks were unnoticed, and he became impatient; but, at last, Lady Bradshaigh dropped the mask, and the author became her valued and avowed correspondent. Her sister soon joined the two friends, and attempted to convert Lovelace, by suggesting that the aid of a 'Dr. Christian' should be employed in the novel. But Lovelace was not of a stamp—though his friend Belford was, (and the difference between the two libertines is admirably drawn)—to be converted.

Four volumes of 'Clarissa' had appeared; and Richardson was assailed with entreaties that he would not make the catastrophe tragical. We can easily conceive the sincerity

of those readers of the work. As we proceed, an intense desire to save the being deserted by her natural friends, assailed, duped, betrayed, for ever degraded, arises in our minds with as much force as if we were reading—what often far exceeds fiction—the report of some criminal trial. Cibber, with all the coarseness of an aged profligate, wished to marry Clarissa and Lovelace; but Richardson knew better: the sublime moral of the story was left unscathed. Lovelace was punished, first mentally, then by the avenging sword of Morden. Clarissa, after showing that true purity can surmount and survive every disgrace, is taken to the regions of light. Many are the noble passages in this grand book; but there are few, perhaps, more truly touching than the narrative of her last hours. True to nature, Richardson has made the mind rise as the soul is ready to depart; aware that in slow decline, whether from consumption or other chronic disease, or from the complication which we vaguely call *heart-break*, the intellect is spared to the last, he portrays her expiring in all the gentle heroism, the sanctity and the charity of a saint. She dies surrounded, not by loving relatives—with the exception of Morden,—but by servants, humble friends, and by him who, next to Lovelace, had, as being privy to her fate, most deeply wronged her, Belford. Yet as in expiring, when her sight fails, 'Is not this Mr. Morden's hand?' she asks: 'which is Mr. Belford's?' 'I gave her mine.' The penitent Belford writes the narrative. 'God Almighty bless you both!' said she, 'and make you both in your last hours—for you *must* come to this—happy as I am!'

We are quite prepared to admit that 'Clarissa,' rather than 'Pamela,' 'may have done more good than twenty sermons.' We may also cordially concur with Rousseau's enthusiasm, when he exclaimed, '*On n'a jamais fait encore, en quelque langue que ce soit de roman égal à Clarissa ni même approchant.*'

We do not, however, at all accord with that Scottish Lord of Session who, Sir Walter Scott informs us, used to read Sir Charles Grandison over once in every two years. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu justly said, that Richardson had no idea of painting high life. The freedoms which he describes as passing between relatives were considered as vulgarities in that, as they would be in this age. 'Such liberties,' Lady Mary writes, 'as pass between Mr. Lovelace and his cousins, are not to be excused by the relation. I should have been much astonished if Lord Denbigh should have offered to kiss me; and I dare swear Lord Trentham never attempted such impertinence to you.'

Neither do we think that Sir Charles Grandison is a true or attractive model of a gentleman, a character to which we attach the charm of natural manners, refined by early association with the refined, and perfected by a cultivated mind.

Richardson died in 1761, aged seventy-two. No procession to Westminster Abbey honoured the remains of one whose great talents were devoted to benefit others. By his own wish he was buried in St. Bride's church, beside his first wife's remains; and followed to the grave by those amongst whom he had lived,—friends, companions, servants. His friend Mrs. Elizabeth Carter wrote a wordy epitaph,—for those were the days of wordiness,—on his monument.

Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne were almost contemporaries. Fielding was born in 1707; Sterne in 1713: and Smollett in 1721. All were men of good families, and of far greater expectations in life than the hard-working and excellent, but somewhat small-minded Samuel Richardson. Henry Fielding was a younger branch of the Fieldings, Earls of Denbigh; Smollett was the grandson of Sir James Smollett, one of the Consistorial Judges of Edinburgh: Sterne could boast of an Archbishop of York, Dr. Richard Sterne, as his direct ancestor. Of the three men, with all his faults, we prefer the reckless, gay-hearted Fielding, who, descended as he was

from the sister of the first Duke of Buckingham, had much of the dash of a cavalier about him, with no little mixture of the wildness of a courtier of Charles the Second, in his composition. He began life with no other alternative than that of being, as he said, 'a hackney writer, or a hackney coachman!' It is true that he was educated at Eton, and that his father, General Fielding, had promised him an allowance of two hundred a year, which, Fielding said, 'anyone might pay who could.' But General Fielding had a large second family to support; and the joyous, high-spirited Henry was left to idle about town, with the handsomest face and figure possible, and with great spirits, a strong constitution, and with that sort of philosophy which leads men to enjoy the present, and leaves the future to take care of itself.

To his 'happy constitution' Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who knew him well, has added her tribute. It appears to have been as joyous, though not perhaps so heartless, as her own.

Fielding became at first a writer for the stage: then he collected together a company of discarded comedians, and tried his luck as a manager of the Haymarket Theatre, with what he chose to style the 'Great Mogul's Company of Comedians.' That scheme failed; and the company, which he said 'had seemed to drop from the clouds,' was disbanded.

He next married. His wife, a Miss Craddock, was beautiful, and had a fortune of 1500*l.* Fielding also succeeded to a small estate of about 200*l.* a year, at Stower, in Derbyshire.

Good fortune is fatal to such men as Fielding. He set up a carriage, and hired servants; his liveries were of a bright yellow, so required constant renewal. Horses, and hounds, and guests soon helped the yellow-liveried footmen to ruin their master.

Fielding's life was composed of ever-shifting scenes; and now the curtain fell for a time. It is drawn up: and we find

him in the dusty Temple. Coaches and footmen, horses and hounds, have all made their exit; and Fielding is poring over law-books, and preparing to be called to the bar;—and called he was; but few briefs followed him to Westminster Hall, or Lincoln's Inn. Solicitors did not fancy that the wit could give a sage opinion: and Fielding was obliged again to become a hackney-writer, and to trust to pamphlets, essays, and tracts—then a fashionable form of literature—for subsistence. He loved his wife and family fondly; and when she who shared many vicissitudes with him died, and he was left a widower, his grief was intense.

'Pamela' made its appearance; and Fielding, 'seduced,' as Sir Walter Scott expresses it, 'by that wicked spirit of wit which cannot forbear turning into ridicule the idol of the day,' produced the 'History of Joseph Andrews,' as a satire on 'Pamela.' This work was eminently successful; the character of Abraham Adams being, alone, sufficient to stamp it as one of the most remarkable productions of the day.

In 1749, Fielding was made Justice of the Peace for London and Westminster; that post and a small pension being given him for his literary services to the Whig cause. Careless and disreputable, he yet did not avail himself of this appointment to plunder the public, which was then so often done.

His salary was paid to him in fees. Poor and needy, he could still never endure to take a shilling from a man who would 'not have another left;' so that 500*l.* a year 'of the dirtiest money upon earth' was, he relates, reduced to 300*l.*, a considerable portion of which remained with his clerk.

'Tom Jones' was also received by the public with enthusiasm. In France, as Madame de Stael observes, 'people read in order to talk about what they read.' But it must have been a strange state of society in which 'Tom Jones' could be the theme of conversation.

Disease, brought on partly by reckless habits, partly by

hard work, ended Fielding's life at the age of forty-eight. He died of a complication of disorders,—asthma, dropsy, and jaundice,—at Lisbon, having left with a breaking heart his children, on whom he doated, wholly unprovided for. But his brother, Sir John Fielding, took his widow (for Fielding had entered into a second marriage) and his four orphan children under his care; and they were suitably maintained.*

Tobias Smollett, the celebrated author of 'Humphry Clinker,' was born in the old House of Dalquhurn, in the valley of Leven, one of the most beautiful districts in Scotland, not far from the shores of Loch Lomond. Scotchman like, Smollett preferred that lake to the Lago di Garda, or to the Lake of Geneva. 'This country,' he remarks, 'is justly styled the "Arcadia of Scotland." I do not doubt,' he adds, 'but it may vie with Arcadia in everything but climate: I am sure it excells it in verdure, wood, and water.'

From these early associations Smollett derived that love of nature which so greatly refines the hard, cold Scot. After picking up the rudiments of knowledge at the grammar school of Dumbarton, he was apprenticed to a Mr. Gordon, a surgeon at Glasgow. That kind master appreciated his pupil. When he heard some of his neighbours talk highly of their pupils, 'It may,' he said, 'be all very true; but give me, before them all, my own callant, with the stane in his pouch.' In plain English, — a spirited lad, always ready to play off some prank, always prepared with a stone in his pocket to perform it.

Smollett's grandfather, Sir James, having cut off the children of his youngest son in his will, Tobias, with a tragedy called 'The Regicide' in his pocket, went up to London to seek his fortune; and disappointed in his hopes, he next sailed, as surgeon's mate, in a ship-of-the-line, to Carthagena:

* Mrs. S. C. Hall, the accomplished authoress, is, we believe, descended from Henry Fielding.

and in that, his only nautical trip, he acquired an intimate knowledge of sailors and their ways and habits, and learned to describe them with so much truth, that henceforth, says Scott, 'whoever has undertaken the same task has seemed to copy more from Smollett than from nature.' He returned to Scotland at the epoch when the pupil of Gay's fables, William, Duke of Cumberland, was permitting the atrocities of his troops, after the total defeat of the Jacobites. One evening he was in company with some gentlemen who sat down to cards. Smollett, not choosing to play, began to write. 'I suppose,' said Robert Graham, of Graham, 'you are writing verses?' Smollett replied that he was, and read him those beautiful verses entitled 'The Tears of Scotland;' and beginning,

'Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn'—

upon which it was remarked that the termination of the poem, being strongly political, might give offence. He sat down again and indignantly scribbled off the following stanza:

'While the warm blood bedews my veins,
And unimpaired remembrance reigns,
Resentment of my country's fate
Within my filial breast shall beat;
Yes, spite of thine, insulting foe,
My sympathizing verse shall flow:
Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn,
Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn!'

He began to practise as a physician; and failed in his profession. He could not, it is said, either feel or express sympathy with small ailments; he could not flatter, with a face of concern, the lady '*toujours en petite santé*.' Such a deficiency in art is fatal to a man beginning the world, although Baillie and Abernethy, at the top of the tree, might adopt what course they pleased. Every one remembers the anecdote of Baillie, who was pursued by a fine lady hypochondriac to the bottom of the stairs, with the entreaty, 'But

pray, doctor, don't go away without telling me if I may, after the opera to-night, eat a few oysters?' 'Yes, madam,'—and, with an eye of fire,—'the shells too, if you like!' No one pitied the martyr to Abernethy's temper, an elderly gentleman who objected, as poor human nature would do, to a long course of blue pill and cold water; 'I can't, doctor; indeed I can't!' murmured the poor invalid. 'Then,' replied Abernethy, looking as blue as his own pills, 'you may go, and be ——' let us not write the word. It was reiterated, we are told, with emphasis, till the patient, glad to escape at any cost, was safe in the corner of his hackney-coach.

Smollett, however, had never arrived at the proper station even for a little irritability. He abandoned medicine and wrote 'Roderick Random,' the second example of the serious romance, or English novel.

All the characters were individual likenesses. Potion was Mr. Gordon, Tobias's master; Gawkey and Crabbe were Scottish acquaintance; two naval officers, who could never have dreamt of being immortalized, were Oakum and Whiffle; Garrick and Lyttleton were Marmozet and Sheerwit; Smollett's wife, the lovely and accomplished Miss Lascelles, is supposed to have been drawn in Narcissa;—whilst he was Roderick Random. These personalities made the novel, of course, most popular with the public; and the sale was immense.

In 1751, 'Peregrine Pickle' appeared in Paris. It was published by the author on his own account; and the sale, Smollett declared, was therefore obstructed by the booksellers. Inferior, in ease and simplicity, to 'Roderick Random,' 'Peregrine Pickle' was a work of more elaborate execution than the former. It was, however, a fiction of splendid colouring; but indebted for its success to personal allusions. Akenside, who had offended the pride of the Scotchman by remarks upon his nation, is the Doctor of Medicine; and Lady Vane, an infamous *intrigante*, even herself supplied Smollett

with the materials for the 'Memoirs of the Lady of Quality,' a tale thrust into the work in the manner introduced by Cervantes. Lady Vane, determined to be notorious, paid Smollett for the introduction of her story.

With justice did the public complain of the licentiousness of some of the scenes in 'Peregrine Pickle;' and, though the author professed to have reformed that capital fault, the work still remains unreadable. It has descended, therefore, to the servants' hall and the pantry, where, until the purer productions of the present day became popular, old soiled copies of Smollett's novels might be found.

The 'Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom,' followed; and Smollett showed how little his moral tone was improved. It is a picture of human depravity of the deepest die; and not all the exquisite skill of the author can rescue it from reprobation. The dissolute may find delight in it; but as far as the 'Literature of Society' in our day is concerned, 'Count Fathom' is extinct.

The translation of Don Quixote next appeared; and after its publication Smollett went to Scotson, in Peebleshire, to visit his mother, from whom he had long been separated. Smollett, wishing to see if she really remembered him, was introduced to her as a person recently arrived from the West Indies, who knew there her son, Tobias. But the amiable imposture, reminding one in its main incident of the beautiful tragedy by Ford, founded on a similar stratagem (which ended so fatally in the drama), was not carried out: and the mother could not mistake her long absent, but still loved son.

The next novel written by Smollett was styled 'The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves.' It appeared in parts, in the 'Monthly Repository,' being intended to give some spirit to that heavy publication. It was written off hastily, just before post-time, when Smollett was on a visit in Scotland, and it is much inferior to its predecessors in wit and style,

and far worse in its license and indelicacy. It has gone to the tomb of books, almost suicidal in that point, which those who best love reading dare not read.

Smollett's life was not a happy one. To the festering cares of a chronic poverty, was added the sorrow of losing an amiable and promising only child. Elizabeth Smollett, his daughter, died at the age of fifteen; and half poor Smollett's life seemed to go with her to the tomb.

His health was now broken up; he retreated to Leghorn. Dr. Armstrong, his kind friend, procured him a lovely villa at Monte Novo, overlooking the sea, near Leghorn; and here he wrote 'The Expedition of Humphry Clinker.' It is a masterly production; and the notion of expressing the various effects of the same objects on different members of the same family is carried out in perfection. Matthew Bramble; Smollett himself; Tabitha Bramble, and Captain Lismahago, —who is said to have been painted after nature,—an old officer well known during the last century in the old town of Edinburgh, being the model,—are original conceptions. It is touching to trace, in this *chef d'œuvre* of Smollett's, the fond partiality which, far from his own country, he cherished for its capital and its scenes. Whilst he was sinking slowly into a premature grave, critics, influenced partly by hatred of Wilkes and Churchill, were railing at the undying love of a Scotchman for his home. He expired on the 21st of October, 1771, at the age of fifty-one years.

There is something noble and even engaging in the character of Smollett: he stooped to no patron; he sued for no favour; he compromised no opinions; he maintained himself by his talents, and lived and died an independent, dauntless Scot. Yet that stern heart was broken, it is said, by the death of that young, fondly-loved girl who preceded him to the tomb. What a conjunction of fierce and gentle qualities; —of a heart full of tenderness, yet proud; of a nature replete

with satirical dispositions, yet candid and forgiving. His genius Sir Walter Scott likens to that of Rubens. Like Rubens, Smollett in person was singularly handsome, and winning in manners. One cannot but regret that one knows so little of his inner life, and that that little presents a melancholy picture of the destiny of a man of letters.

CHAPTER X.

LITERARY SOCIETY. — TAKING THE FORM OF CLIQUES. — JOHNSON. — GOLDSMITH. — MISS BURNEY; HER 'EVELINA' AND 'CAMILLA.' — MRS. PIOZZI. — MISS SEWARD AND THE EDGEWORTHS. — DARWIN; HIS POEMS. — DAY; HIS 'SANDFORD AND MERTON.' — MR. EDGEWORTH. — SAVILE. — MISS SEWARD'S WORKS AND LETTERS. — SIR WALTER SCOTT'S TRIBUTE TO HER MEMORY. — FALSE TASTE IN HER POEMS AND IN THOSE OF DARWIN.

CHAPTER X.

WE are an exclusive people, and even in our literary associations, have been, in all modern times, prone to nurture our own pet *littérateurs*, to feed and flatter them, to write them up, and to write those who rival them, down. We are a people of party spirit, and become, in letters, as well as in politics, partisans; hence, far even in the depths of seclusion, has the spirit of coterie penetrated.

For some years it flourished in the large house at Streatham, which Fanny Burney has turned inside and outside, and exposed to our view, and Goldsmith, Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter, Fanny Burney, and all the Burneys, Boswell, and Madam Piozzi, sat under the shadow of that

> 'Oak, wide spreading o'er the shrubs below,
> That round his roots with puny foliage blow.'

Amongst a crowd so well known, and so witty, let us pause only on two of those who have left us, amid their other contributions to the 'Literature of Society,' the 'Vicar of Wakefield' and 'Evelina.' Not that we would willingly write those titles of works so justly celebrated in the same sentence. The 'Vicar of Wakefield' is the production of a genius wholly untrammelled by the con-

ventionalities of society. Whatever Goldsmith was as a man, as a writer he was truthful and earnest. The kind heart, returning in the seclusion of the closet to the simplicity of early life, poured itself out as freely in the tale of domestic adversity in touching prose, as in the pensive, rather than mournful strains of the 'Deserted Village;' there can be but one opinion, that whether we consider the framework of the story, or the language in which it is clothed, or the reflections and pictures which arise in the course of the narrative, or the humour and force of the conversation, we may pronounce the 'Vicar of Wakefield' to be the most beautiful story in our language.

Its scenes are taken from that mode of existence which is at once the most picturesque and the most peculiarly English. No country except England presents the interior of the modest parsonage; and the aspect of the husband, father, priest, and gentleman, in one, is peculiar to our island. It is true that the Lutheran clergy, happily for themselves, can marry, and can behold around them, without shame, those olive branches which never seem to flourish in more luxuriant shoots than in the home of a parsonage; but the Lutheran clergy are taken from a different class to our pastors, and they have not the delicacy of the semi-aristocratic clergy of our country. The Vicar of Wakefield in all his simplicity is a perfect gentleman; his dignity is not abashed by the visits of men of fortune and condition; his wife is, in her way, as ambitious in preserving her refinements, as any woman of the world. His daughters are not milkmaids, but blooming beauties; his son George is a youth of spirit, and a gentleman, and Moses, the inimitable Moses, is rather an oddity than a vulgarian. The medium state of the clergy then, and of the rural clergy now, is hit off admirably by Goldsmith.

Then the tale, how full of incident, yet of very probable

incident; how it enlists our best feelings in its progress; how it challenges our sympathies, and our imitation. Despairingly we admit that the 'Vicar of Wakefield' has never been equalled by any later effort of the pen. Such is its power over the heart, so salient its merits, that even on the French stage, to which the story was adapted a few years since, it commanded the applause, and drew forth the tears of an audience prone neither to applaud nor to weep. Yet it may readily be supposed how, like a fine dish of game, *en fricassée*, it was tricked out, and transformed; how far more prosing, than amusing, it was thought essential to make the Vicar; what a double-distilled villain Thornhill became on the stage of the Odeon and the Vaudeville, on both of which it was performed; and how coquettish and artificial the two daughters turned out. The only character perfectly given was Moses, a part, which, with their native comprehension of humour, the French perfectly estimated.

Since, after the settling down of a tempest, one seeks for long suspended pleasures, so, the novels of Fanny Burney, appearing at a period when there was a lull in the political world, after the insurrection of 1745, and before the Gordon riots, gave great pleasure to the world, and gained the authoress a degree of renown that seems quite incomprehensible in our time. 'Evelina,' produced at an early age—(respect to a disputed point, contested as it has been almost to fury, forbids us to say how early)—'Evelina' seems, according to her own account, to have been the only topic of the metropolis, from St. James's to the Borough. And it must indeed have had a most extraordinary success to have brought the obscure girl from the recesses of St. Martin's Lane into all the splendours of Grosvenor Square, and to all the honour of sharing half Dr. Johnson's dinners with him at Streatham.

The extreme novelty of 'Evelina,' its delicacy and purity,

the various styles of society into which the reader is introduced, constituted much of its merit in those days. There was something unexpected and original in the character of the old French grandmother. It was during a period anterior to the French Revolution that 'Evelina' appeared. The world of London was not, therefore, familiarized with the French woman's peculiarities, drawn to the life. The barriers also between the various classes of society were then not relaxed; and the portraiture of the cousins, exaggerated as it is, had all the merit of novelty, which is next to that of originality in the eyes of the 'great, who then held the helm' of the pinnace of which Fame and its rewards were the craft. These, and the agreeable impressions of virtue and beauty rewarded which it leaves on the mind, constitute the sources of the success of a work which it is now found impossible to read through.

'Cecilia' is almost more tedious; but the real talent of the authoress shows forth in 'Camilla,' the least extolled, but certainly the best of her novels. Camilla's character is charming: impulsive, erring, endearing, the old uncle, the spoiled Indiana, the deformed sister, the indulgent pitying father, are perfect. The story is touching and interesting—there are points in it which one can hardly remember without tears; and if we condemn the hard and lofty virtue of the hero, we must admit that it stands in relief to the infirm purpose, and gentle failings of the other characters.

Fanny Burney vanished, however, from all literary cliques when she was tempted into the gilded imprisonment of Windsor Castle and St. James's, and other female novelists and poetesses came to fill up the vacuum which followed the *decadence* of Streatham, and the death of Dr. Johnson.

The death of Dr. Johnson brought what Miss Seward terms 'indiscriminate praise,' which, she says, 'is pouring in

tides round his tomb, and characteristic reality is overlmed in the torrents.'

> 'Strong, midst the Rambler's cronies was the rage,
> To fill with *Sam's* bon mots and tales the page,
> Mere flies, that buzzed around his setting ray,
> And bore a splendour, on their wings, away;
> Thus round his orb the pigmy planets run,
> And catch their little lustre from the sun.'

ilst the works, parodied by Peter Pindar, were subted to posterity for arbitration as it were, we might l exclaim with Sir John Hawkins:—

> 'For God's sake slay each anecdotic scrap,
> Let me draw breath, and take a trifling nap;
> With one half hour's restoring slumber blest,
> And heaven's assistance, I may bear the rest.' *

eased from the bondage of the 'surly Rambler,' as Peter dar calls him, a host of tame wits and polite poets came h unscathed after Johnson's death. It is not indeed fair dopt the belief that Johnson despised female attainments, that his ghost, if permitted to sneer on earth, would have sen literary women for his subjects, though Pindar makes ı say:—

> 'For that Piozzi's wife, Sir John, exhort her,
> To *draw* her immortality from porter;
> Give up her anecdotical inditing,
> And study housewifery instead of writing;
> Bid her a poor biography suspend,
> Nor crucify, through vanity, a friend.
> I know no business women have with learning,
> I scorn, I hate, the mole-eyed half-discerning.'†

Vhilst Mrs. Piozzi, as regardless of what Dr. Johnson's st might utter, as she had long been of what he had ered in the flesh, was preparing her anecdotes in his ive city of Lichfield, Johnson's decline was watched

* Peter Pindar. † Ibid., Eclogue v.

by one who with mingled terror, disapproval, pity, and disgust, beheld the gradual sinking of a great light into the shades of death.

'I have lately,' wrote Anna Seward to her friend Miss Weston, 'been almost in the daily habit of contemplating a very melancholy spectacle. The great Johnson is here, labouring under the paroxysms of a disease which must speedily be fatal. He shrinks from the consciousness with the extremest horror. It is by his repeatedly expressed desire that I visit him often. Yet I am sure he neither does, nor ever did, feel much regard for me; but he would fain escape, for a time, in any society, from the terrible idea of his approaching dissolution.' * * *

'A few days since I was to drink tea with him, by his request, at Mr. Porter's. When I went into the room he was in a deep, but agitated slumber, in an arm-chair. Opening the door with that caution due to the sick, he did not awake at my entrance. I stood by him several minutes, mournfully contemplating the temporary suspension of those vast intellectual powers, which must so soon, as to this world, be eternally quenched. Upon the servant entering to announce the arrival of a gentleman of the University, introduced by Mr. White, he awoke with convulsive starts,—but rising, with more alacrity than could have been expected, he said, "Come, my dear lady, let you and I attend these gentlemen in the study." He received them with more than usual complacency; but whimsically chose to get astride upon his chair seat, with his face to its back, keeping a trotting motion as if on horseback; but, in this odd position, he poured forth streams of eloquence, illumined by frequent flashes of wit and humour, without any tincture of malignity.'*

Miss Seward's prediction that this literary comet would set where it *rose*, and that Lichfield would receive his 'pale and stern remains,' was verified. On the 23rd of December, 1784, we

* Seward's Letters, vol. i., p. 7.

find her addressing her 'dear bard,' William Hayley, with the intelligence that Johnson's suffering mind and body were at rest; or, to adopt her words, that 'extinct was that mighty spirit in which so much of good and evil, so much large expansion and illiberal narrowness of mind, were blended.'

New lights, and a new school of literature now arose, and Lichfield was its centre; something in the same manner, though not in the same degree, as in Edinburgh during the time of Sydney Smith and Dugald Stuart, Mrs. Grant, and her contemporaries.

Miss Seward was then, she tells us, receiving the 'highest encomiums on her poem, "Louisa," by the first literary characters of the age.' Unhappily it has wholly escaped the notice of ours; and except in the selected young ladies' library of some maiden aunt, 'Louisa,' which Hayley extolled to the skies, is scarcely to be brought from obscurity. Yet its writer formed the centre of as pleasant a *clique* as ever made flattery in its mildest form of infection, its bond of union.

Whilst 'Louisa' was going into successive editions, its authoress, still young, is reverently attending on the age and infirmities of her father, an old clergyman, living in the Bishop's Palace, at Lichfield. Let us snatch a glimpse at them soon after the death of Mrs. Seward, that mother, for whose sake Anna Seward had, it is said, relinquished all hopes of marriage, and dismissed every suitor who had ever addressed her with his love suit.

Anna Seward,—the most successful of unendowed poetesses, —appears before us, in or about her thirtieth year—still in all the freshness of her beauty. Let us follow her into her father's library, as she limps along—for she is lame from the fracture of her knee, years ago—yet she is still, though bent, tall, elegant, and even stately. She seats herself before a table, and with the finest and fairest of hands opens a book. We gaze upon her oval face as she upraises it to look at the old man beside her in his easy chair. That face is full of

harmony, as it is of expression. The features are small, regular, and delicate; there is something very firm, though very sweet, in the mouth. Her eyes, of auburn, are of the same hue and shade precisely as her hair, which is drawn up from her high forehead, and gathered under a knot of pearls. Around her long, fair throat is a string of pearls sewn to a small band of black velvet; over her shoulders she wears a loose boddice, which is edged with sable fur, leaving her bust exposed in the folds of her loose and short-waisted dress. Large white muslin or cambric sleeves fall over her delicate arms.

She begins to read aloud to the venerable and sole surviving parent at her side. Wright of Derby,—one of the most faithful of limners,—has left a portrait of this erudite and accomplished man, to whose care and knowledge his daughter owed so much. We see him in his ample wig, such as parsons then wore, with a channel of fine white unpowdered hair in its centre, rising on either side into acclivities, each squared off at the ears; his bands, and ample gown, and the folds of his cassock are conscientiously depicted. Wright has given us likewise the countenance he probably had often studied; for art as well as literature found its welcome in the Cathedral Close of Lichfield: the aged puckered face is still handsome; still kind, the mild and glistening eye; still ready to smile, the well-marked and, as yet, undistorted mouth.

We listen to Anna Seward as she reads aloud to her parent. Her tone, her taste, her recitation, and her rare gift of reading aloud were praised by Siddons, and admired by Scott. And, as she reads, those eyes which Scott called auburn, become darker, and appear to flash fire.

As she thus tries to wile away the tedious hours of an unemployed afternoon, guests come and go, and the whole of those who formed the life-long interests of Anna Seward's life, pass in review before us. Let us take her at her brightest period, for, presently, clouds overshadow her. The father

who now sits and gazes at the beautiful reader, shall in a few years still sit there, but shall listen no longer; palsy shall obscure his reason, which retained, at the last, no other consciousness save that his daughter was near him, and that she still attended on him, or, as she thus writes:—

> 'Though now thy vital lamp's faint light
> Gleams on the verge of its long night,
> Dull, dim, and weak, its social blaze,
> And pale its intellectual rays.
> * * * *
> Oh, be it mine to cheer and warm,
> Thy drooping heart, thy helpless form.'

As yet, however, bright forms linger around her. Anna is vowed to celibacy, yet is full of sympathies for the unmarried. First, appears the ill-fated André, the victim not of Washington's hard decree, but of the American faction that urged the general on to slay, not to spare. In the delicate features, the pale London look, and the unformed manners of the merchant's clerk—for in that capacity André then was—we trace not the fearless soldier, with his close-cropped, fair-coloured and powdered hair, his tight regimentals, his look of fearlessness, his desperate courage. We cannot anticipate the heroic mind which faced the gibbet as calmly as if he had been going to breakfast. These are his few happy days—poor André!

A beautiful young girl, whom all call Honora—one of those accessible winning beings to whom all give the Christian name—is listening to his tale of love in yon far-off oriel window. She is Honora Sneyd, one of the daughters of Mr. Sneyd of Bishton, and she has been placed, after her mother's death, in the family of Mr. Seward, for education. And Anna, the gifted Anna, has taken the lovely Honora to her heart as a sister. Regular features, an exquisite complexion, extreme grace of form and of deportment, are among the least of Honora's charms. Her manners are irresistible, her mind is cultivated, her conver-

sation full of interest, yet without the least pretension, or the smallest approach to pedantry, for her reasoning powers are excellent. Even then the early doom which hung over her was threatening her, and poor André in his letters—letters addressed not to Honora, but to her friend, Miss Seward,—hints at the terrible fear of consumption; but it passed over, at that time, and Honora was spared—to mourn *his* doom. Miss Seward, referring years afterwards to Lady Foster Cunliffe, thus recalls the image of Honora:—'She' (Lady Cunliffe), she writes, 'is on a larger scale both as to face and figure, but I never saw features, or a countenance, so like my lost Honora's. Her complexion is of as glowing a bloom, with a superior degree of fairness; the contour of the face, the form of the mouth, the nose, that, between the Roman and Grecian, is lovelier than either; the *etherial smile* on the lip, and the bright smile of intelligence and joy, are all Honora's. The same soft complacency shone in her eyes while she conversed with me. I was obliged to explain the source of those involuntary tears which so often filled my eyes, as she hung on my arm, in animated conversation. The regret I felt when we parted was extreme—more indeed than the shortness of our acquaintance warranted, but for the influence of this endearing, this fascinating resemblance.'

—Years elapse—André is gone, and one who is destined to succeed him in the young heart which had once throbbed responsive to his vows, is arrived on the scene of action.

'About the year 1765,' writes Miss Seward (in her 'Life of Darwin'), 'came to Lichfield from the neighbourhood of Reading, the young and gay philosopher Mr. Edgeworth, a man of fortune, and recently married to Miss Elers, of Oxfordshire.' Such is the first notice which occurs in Anna Seward's works of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, the father of Maria Edgeworth. Though then only two-and-twenty, and looking still younger, this young Irishman was one of the most accomplished of men. He was a mathematician; a good classic, he was

at home in several modern languages; he danced, and fenced, and shot with the bow and arrow as gracefully as any carpet knight of yore; a young Oxonian without pedantry, and aiming to be the fine gentleman, Mr. Edgeworth plumed himself on being also a mechanic: it was he who, according to his own account, threw out the first suggestions of telegraphic communication.

Mr. Edgeworth was attracted to Lichfield by the fame of the young physician who had recently settled in that city. Dr. Erasmus Darwin, the author of the 'Loves of the Plants,' was the son of a private gentleman near Newark; he had commenced the practice of physic at the age of twenty-four—ten years previously—bringing with him high testimonials from Edinburgh and Cambridge.

He was just such a man as Edinburgh and Cambridge, in those days, would produce. 'Extreme,' Miss Seward tells us, 'was his scepticism to human truth.' Unhappily the scepticism was not confined to human truth alone, but presumed to question that which is divine. Generous, benevolent, sincere, those high qualities were tarnished by a too great consciousness of mental power; hence that impatience of opposition, hence the keen-edged sarcasm to which Darwin was addicted, hence the hard nature, which doubt contributed to freeze into coldness.

Let us gaze upon him, nevertheless, reverently, as a good and great physician, as we see him, in our mind's eye, enter the drawing-room where sit Anna Seward and her father.

His step is ponderous, for already is his athletic form disposed to corpulence; his limbs, writes his fair biographer, were 'too heavy for exact proportion;' his plain ordinary features rather, she adds, 'saturnine than sprightly,' are marked with small-pox; his ample shoulders have a stoop, as if that heavy figure were ready to fall over and crush you; and, to crown all, this young martyr to professional etiquette must needs wear a large, full-bottomed wig which, at thirty-five, made

him look fifty.' To add to the total absence of romance in a man whose very soul was full of poetry, he had an air of florid health, so that the pale student was not recognizable in his exterior.

As he enters, however, Erasmus Darwin's cheering smile and kindly address cast a ray of sunshine around him; yet, as he addresses every one, he stammers—so unkind had nature been to this celebrated man. Yet, relates Miss Seward, 'the good things he said were always worth waiting for,'—a remark which cannot be applied to all who are similarly affected with hesitation; for it is often quite the reverse.

The young and gay philosopher, Mr. Edgeworth, with his handsome features, his lively glances, and his boyish appearance, soon enters also, and with him comes an Oxford friend, and Day, the author of 'Sandford and Merton'—the Tom Brown of our young days—is presented to the gifted Anna.

Day, curiously enough, lived at *Bear* Hill, Berkshire, and, if all accounts be true, there were moments when his deportment did not belie that locality. Miss Edgeworth painted him in her story of 'Forester,' and elucidated the romantic project of his life in her character of Clarence Hervey in Belinda. Honourable *aux ongles*, generous and well informed, with an ample fortune, and his own master, Mr. Day began and ended life with what seems to us commonplace mortals 'a comedy of errors.' He was a misanthropist at twenty-four; had a profound and proud contempt of common life society; he regulated every action by the highest considerations of philanthropy and duty, but forgot the precepts of plain sense. So he takes his place in the cheerful circle, who have become accustomed to his eccentricities. Powder and fine clothes were then, as Miss Seward remarks, the appendages of gentlemen. Mr. Day wore neither. He had, nevertheless, a certain outward dignity of demeanour. Even though deeply pitted with the small-pox, his face was agreeable, though we are told 'there was a sort of weight on the lids of his large

hazel eyes.' Like all the coterie, he was an ardent patriot. Wright of Derby, in painting his portrait, depicts him as leaning against a column inscribed to Hampden, and as looking up enthusiastically, as if meditating on the contents of a book held in his right hand. That book is open at Hampden's oration in Parliament against ship money, which was demanded by Charles the First. Day is standing in the open air, amid the coming tempest, and a dark and lurid sky over-head. As he stands in this uncomfortable plight, a flash of lightning illuminates the contents of the volume in Mr. Day's right hand. The politics of those days might indeed be well expressed by the war of the elements. 'The poetic sentiments,' writes Miss Seward, 'and what were then the politics of the original, appear in the choice of subject and attitude.'

With Mr. Day enters William Seward, the author of the 'Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons,' and one of Doctor Johnson's associates. Yet, we are told, though a man of abilities above the level, he shone rather as a satellite, than a planet, in that gifted circle.

Helen Williams—the poetess,—Boswell, and Hayley, not to enumerate a crowd of occasional visitants, were often gathered into this circle. Hayley, best known to us moderns not only as the author of 'Cowper's Life,' but by Lord Byron's lines on his 'Triumphs of Temper'—

'At least, I'm sure, they triumphed over mine'—

had a spirit far more congenial to Miss Seward than James Boswell. One of Miss Seward's cherished notions was that Johnson died a Roman Catholic and defended the executions of the bloody Queen Mary's time; and this notion, she declares, was admitted by Boswell. Another of Johnson's offences was his dislike of Milton. Johnson told her once 'that he would hang a dog that read Milton's Lycidas.' 'Then what,' she replied, 'is to become of me who can say it by heart, and who often repeat it to myself with a delight

that grows by what it feeds on?'—'Die,' he returned with a growl, 'in a surfeit of bad taste.'

Boswell, though not indefeasibly true to his deceased friend, was stiff in some points in his defence; but Hayley, smooth and flattering, bandying compliments to her and she to him, was indeed a delightful satellite. We doubt if he were ever anywhere a planet, save in his own dreams. One could easily imagine that neither Miss Seward nor Hayley would be happy in the presence of him whom the indignant Anna calls 'the bloody inquisitor.' Mrs. Brooke, the daughter of Dr. Brooke, the rector of Birmingham—the friend of Johnson and the authoress of 'Lady Julia Mandeville' and other novels—was also admitted (as a satellite probably) into the starry sphere around Miss Seward. And now there was formed a resident society—perhaps the first, certainly the last of any so notable ever abiding in an English provincial city,—for Mr. Edgeworth and Mr. Day took a house close to the town, and Day brought thither his Sabrina, a child of thirteen whom he was educating to become his wife, but who ended her days as the widow of Mr. Bicknell, a lawyer, and who became the beloved and respected superintendent of Dr. Charles Burney's large school at Greenwich.

Occasionally Mrs. Thrale Piozzi paid her respects to the kind, vain, and attractive Miss Seward, and the celebrated Colonel Barry met her there. And, whilst all this wit and literature were thus collected, a little romance was going silently on, to be unravelled in the course of time. By a singular coincidence, Colonel Barry had succeeded the unhappy Major André as adjutant-general to our armies in America. 'The laurel and the bays were entwined around his brow.' Both, it appears, loved Honora Sneyd, and her alone. In 1787, Miss Seward thus writes to her friend Helen Williams:—

'Within these three years, Colonel Barry assured me that she (Honora) was the only person he had ever seriously loved; that

'er beheld a being in whom the blended charms of mind
erson could approach the lustre of those which glowed
air, the look, the smile, the glance, and the eloquence
ıora Sneyd. Judge you, then, who know the idolatry
spirit on that theme, how Colonel Barry must have
ıd my regard, by exhibiting, in himself, a second proof
stancy, so rare in these gross times, to my Madame de
ın, now mouldering in the tomb, but surviving, in my
ry, with all her matchless endowments, graces, and
s.'

ıora, at the time when these words were written, was in
'ave. After finding, to borrow Sheridan's words,

'Friends in all the aged,
And lovers in the young,'

ıd married Richard Lovell Edgeworth, whose first wife,
ıother of Maria Edgeworth, died whilst he was still
; enough, and always vain enough, even to aspire
venile beauties. But the days of her whom André
oved so despairingly, and to whom the philosophic
had also offered his hand, were numbered. She
rs to have been happy in her union with Mr. Edgeworth,
she certainly paid him a tribute on her death-bed.
e the Amaury of Dumas who, looking at her friend as
ıccessor, carried with her into the grave a gnawing
ısy, Honora, ere she expired, recommended to her hus-
her sister Elizabeth, young, lovely, talented, as his future
He took her advice; but his marriage with Elizabeth
l was performed under difficulties, and secretly. Happy
t, it was a brief union. The advocates of marriage with
eased wife's sister must pause ere they applaud, and
forth the shade of the dying Honora to add her attesta-
o their many proofs that such marriages are natural and
y. Undismayed by the hereditary malady in the Sneyd
y, Mr. Edgeworth tempted his destiny. Elizabeth also
victim to consumption. Her lovely and intellectual step-

daughter and niece died of the same malady; her own child, Elizabeth, did not long survive her, but sank, in a decline, in early youth. Eventually Mr. Edgeworth married a fourth time, and his choice was such as to insure the happiness of his children. His widow—the sister of the late admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, and the aunt of the two accomplished travellers in the East, who have so lately published their travels, —survived him, and was justly honoured and beloved.

As 'mown grass,' so did the various persons who formed the delight of Miss Seward's coterie, one by one, fade away. Honora was in the tomb, when the death of Mr. Day was suddenly announced at Edgeworthston. He fell a victim, as Maria Edgeworth relates, 'to his own benevolence.' Having observed that horses suffer much in the breaking from the brutality of horse-breakers, no Rarey being then amongst us, Mr. Day trained a horse for his own use; but it was not well broken; it took fright at the winnowing of some corn near the road, plunged, and threw him. He had a concussion on the brain, never spoke after the fall, and expired in a quarter of an hour. Thus perished the boy's best friend—the author of 'Sandford and Merton'—a work in which honour, practical goodness, and truth, are inculcated so as to fortify the youthful heart.

Next, Darwin passed away from this world to one in which, it has been said, he did not believe. His life had been, with some exceptions, peculiarly felicitous. He had indeed been once nearly killed by an accident, which had produced permanent lameness by injuring the patella of the left knee. Unhappily, poet and physician as he was, he had also a turn for mechanics, which led him to construct a carriage on a new plan. It is thus described by Miss Seward:—'It was a platform, with a seat fixed upon a very high pair of wheels, and supported in the front upon the back of the horse, by means of a kind of proboscis, which, forming an arch, reached over the hind quarters of the horse, and passed

through a ring, placed on an upright piece of iron, which worked in a socket, fixed in the saddle. The horse could thus move from one side of the road to the other, quartering, as it is called, at the will of the driver, whose constant attention was necessarily employed to regulate a piece of machinery contrived, but not *well* contrived, for that purpose.'

On several occasions was the doctor thrown from this carriage; and the last time he used it was previously to the fall that lamed him. All these misadventures he treated, when speaking of them to his patients, with the stoicism of that French marquis who fell from a balcony at Versailles; and who, as it was a rule of court politeness that nothing unfortunate should ever be mentioned in the King's presence, replied to his Majesty's inquiries, whether he was hurt, '*tout au contraire, monsieur.*'

Although Darwin's lameness did not add to his personal charms, it was his good fortune, after the death of his first wife, to become the husband of the young, rich, and handsome widow of Colonel Pole—one of the family of Chandos Pole. Darwin had long cherished a romantic and Petrarch-like devotion for this lady, and traditions, at Derby, exist as to his solitary mornings under her window when she visited the Priory, a house to which eventually she removed, when she became Mrs. Darwin. The wig, the lameness, the stammering, the age of near half a century, to say nothing of a profession which is assuredly anti-poetical, might have seemed to common minds adverse to romance. And perhaps, at first, Mrs. Pole thought so too. Her first husband had been double her age; he had been peevish and exacting; but had left her six hundred a year; and time had spared her, after this hard apprenticeship to fate, her vivacity and good humour. When rallied upon Dr. Darwin's passion for her, she said, 'I believe he is not very fond of churches, but if he would go into one for my sake I shall not follow him. He is too old for me.' 'Nay, madam,' was the reply, 'what are fifteen years on the

right side?' She replied, with an arch smile, 'I have already had too much of that right side.' Nevertheless she married him, and disappointed, as Miss Seward tells us, young fox-hunting esquires, dashing militaires, and pedantic gownsmen, and took the lame doctor instead. She had then three children by Colonel Pole. By Dr. Darwin she had several, the present Sir Francis Darwin, and three daughters, known long ago in provincial circles as 'Wit, Grace, and Beauty.'

After his second marriage, Dr. Darwin left Lichfield and removed to the Priory at Derby, and eventually to Shrewsbury. He was in love, Miss Seward declares, 'like a very Celadon.' Hitherto botany and mechanics had employed his leisure hours, but he now turned to odes, heroic verses, riddles, and charades, for the solace of his enamoured heart, and the amusement of his devoted wife.

Miss Seward's circle became less and less. One member of that gifted coterie, however, remained near her till death summoned even him away. Now and then we find such touches in her letters as these:—'Mr. Savile and his daughter sang divinely.' Such incidental remarks occur frequently, until the hourglass of Savile's life had been worn out, and he was gathered to another sphere to raise his voice, as Miss Seward has expressed it (in other words, on his monument), amid the seraphim.

Savile was one of the vicars choral of the Cathedral of Lichfield, and was a married man, to whose wife and daughter Anna Seward showed much kindness. The world mistook and misrepresented that friendship, which bore so greatly the aspect of tenderness. It was conceived to be the tie that bound her to celibacy, and, when Savile died, she mourned him with a sorrow that kept the anniversary of his death sacred. Sir Walter Scott is wholly silent on this subject. He felt for Miss Seward a warm partiality, and she made him her literary executor. Just and pure, as ever man was pure, he could not approve; as a friend he would

not condemn. Let the painful mystery rest; the benevolent, impulsive heart of Anna Seward may have had its errors, but it had, also, exalted virtues.

She died, after much suffering, on the 25th of March, 1809. The last words she ever penned were in a postscript to Sir Walter Scott.

'It is Thursday, and each intervening day since I closed my letter has taken large death-strides upon me.' Two days more she languished, and was then released. 'Oh what a blessing is sudden death!' she had previously written; 'I always prayed for it, but am not worthy to have my prayer granted.'

'Her friends,' Sir Walter Scott remarks, 'comprised many names distinguished in British literature;' and her death broke up for ever one of those provincial circles which we shall not, in these days of railroads, ever see again. Many were the minor celebrities who hovered round the Cathedral Close: Sir Brook Boothby, an accomplished member of an ancient Derbyshire family; Mr. Mundy, of Markeaton Hall, the gifted author of two beautiful poems, called 'Needwood Forest,'—all vanished from the scene. No longer did Dr. Darwin and Johnson, who, antipodes in matters of faith, growl defiance at each other when, during Johnson's occasional visits, they met. No longer did Hayley flatter nor Savile sing; all was silent in that episcopal home where so many bright spirits had once ministered. The last, and not least, was one of its latest visitants, Walter Scott.

Miss Seward's poems constitute a far less agreeable and important addition to the 'Literature of Society' than her letters, which, full as they are of anecdotes and of discussion, will be always a valuable commentary on the history of her own times. They have not, however, in other respects, any signal attraction. The language in which she expressed herself is always artificial, and often exaggerated. Self predominates in every epistle. Even in her utmost expressions

of fondness for friends, or regret for their death, she seems to us always to have the publisher, and posthumous reputation, in her eye. Such, unhappily, is too often the case with all literary women; and until such tendencies can be weeded out, neither accomplishments nor learning will secure them from something, in many minds, approaching to disgust.

This voluminous writer bequeathed twelve quarto and manuscript volumes of her letters to Constable of Edinburgh, with injunctions to publish two volumes yearly. They run over the periods between 1784 and 1807. Large as the collection was, it did not comprise a twelfth part of the epistolary writing of the gifted author, yet it filled six volumes.

Her poems were compressed into three volumes by Sir Walter Scott, with the declaration that 'there was not a line in his possession that might not with honour to her who bequeathed him the MSS., be inserted.'

Amongst the most popular of her poetic works were, her novel in verse, 'Louisa,' which passed into two editions, and her monody on the death of Major André, and her collection of original sonnets, published in 1799.

These poems are written with facility and ease, but show none of that high genius which secures immortality. But, as a biographer, Miss Seward was delightful. Her life of Darwin, and her description of the society at Lichfield, are truly animated and characteristic.

Upon Darwin, whom Scott calls the Poet of Flora, the stain rests, as Sir Walter declares, of having inserted the first fifty verses of Miss Seward's poetry in the 'Botanic Garden' without acknowledgment. In this respect only, except that Darwin was the first person to induce her to write verses, are the works of Anna Seward and of the author of the 'Loves of the Plants' connected. On the merits of that poem, once so celebrated, now so forgotten, it lies not within

the compass of our plan to enter. It has far more of science in it than of poetry. If success in a monetary point of view could have secured it immortality, it would not have been wanting. Dr. Darwin received large sums both for his poetic and philosophic works. The philosophy he professed has been found false and superficial, and is out of date. The poetry is no longer suited to the noble simplicity of taste which honours the manliness of Tennyson's verse. What can be expected from the poet who preferred, as Darwin did, Akenside's blank verse to that of Milton?

Much solicitude was shown by Miss Seward for the preservation of her MS. poems, as well as for her letters. Even during her life she had, however, to complain of what she calls 'sonnet forgery,' and discovered what she calls an 'illegitimate sonnet,' with her name inscribed as its authoress, in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for August, 1804. The lines were addressed to a Mr. Dimond, of whose poetic existence she had never heard, and begun,—in a pun, which almost drove her mad,—'Bright Dimond!' Then she complains, with as much vehemence as a certain writer has lately done in 'Macmillan's Magazine,' of certain false anecdotes of her in the sixth volume of 'Public Characters:' alleging that she who could never sing a note in her whole life, had a rare gift of singing. These forgeries and misstatements show, however, how large was the fame she enjoyed: a fame, we must remark, immeasurably extended in proportion to her literary merits, and due, chiefly, to her influence on social life—to her cheerfulness, her encouragement of others, her sympathy, and her personal and mental charms. As a poetess, Sir Walter Scott well describes Miss Seward's 'style,' whilst he hints at her defects:—

'Miss Seward,' he says, 'was in practice trained and attached to that school of picturesque and florid description, of lofty metaphor, and bold personification; of a diction which inversion and the use of compound epithets, rendered as remote

as possible from the tone of ordinary language, which was introduced, or at least considered fashionable, by Darwin, but which was too remote from common life, and natural expression to retain its popularity.'

Happy indeed is it that this modern euphuism is already obsolete, and that a simpler and purer taste has superseded that for Miss Seward's 'Odes' or for Darwin's 'Loves of the Plants.'

CHAPTER XI.

ANSTEY'S 'NEW BATH GUIDE;' EXTRACTS FROM IT.—BATH IN OLDEN TIMES.—COLMAN AND HIS 'BROAD GRINS.' — GEORGE THE FOURTH AND COLMAN. — THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON. — GEORGE COLMAN'S CENSORSHIP. — LAURENCE STERNE; HIS LIFE. — HIS GRANDFATHER THE ARCHBISHOP. — STERNE'S CARELESSNESS OF HIS DUTIES. — HIS 'TRISTRAM SHANDY.'—BURTON'S 'ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY.' — STERNE'S PLAGIARISMS. — HIS PASSION FOR ELIZA. — HER PICTURE. — MRS. RADCLIFFE. — MRS. INCHBALD. — CHARLOTTE SMITH. — MISS AUSTIN.

CHAPTER XI.

COMBINED with Miss Seward's high-flown romance and wordy sentiment, there was much of elevation both in thought and feeling. But such extenuating attributes were not found among her poetical contemporaries, whom we shall briefly refer to as writers whose works depended far more on local causes for their success than on the value of their wit and fancy.

Our tastes must now be strangely changed; for were Anstey's 'New Bath Guide' to appear, it is probable that its circulation would be confined to Bath only,—there is so moderate a sprinkling of wit and humour over so large a surface of mediocrity. The author, Christopher Anstey, a scholar of no mean order, and an aspiring poetaster, appears to have been destined to better things than to saunter in and out of the Pump-room at Bath, or up and down the pleasant promenade of Cheltenham. Bath, however, for many years of his life, was his winter residence, and Cheltenham his summer sojourn, and he fully imbibed the spirit of each place. He drew with a clever pencil the exterior life of Bath; whilst the spirit of his work participated largely in the *persiflage* of Cheltenham. One could not ascribe to him the epithet of *mauvaise langue;* for there is still—notwithstanding his long life passed under the upas-like influence of both places—great good nature and indulgence to the foibles he described in his works.

Originally a country gentleman from Cambridgeshire, gout and a numerous family had driven this poetaster from his life of rural occupation to these then fashionable watering-places; and there he long flourished, visible at every gay assembly in his tie-wig, single-breasted and laced coat, with his point-lace ends to his lawn cravat, his laced white satin waistcoat, and his small cocked-hat, trimmed with gold lace, under his arm; and there Christopher Anstey spent the middle portion, and evening of his days. In his 'New Bath Guide' he has shown us the life to which he thus betook himself. In his lines to his brother-in-law, Mr. Calvert, he thus describes that from which he fled:—

'With every plague that can conspire
To curse a wretched country squire,
Six hundred sheep on fields at Kneeton,
Starv'd as their owner was at Eton.
Twelve hide-bound nags, in empty stable.
Like hungry guests at * * * * 's table,
Calves, cows, and hogs reduced at home,
Some wanting legs like B * l * k * n,
And all as lean as L * * t * * n.
Twice twenty hounds, five squalling brats,
One sickly wife, ten thousand rats;
My hay all swimming down the river!
Tell me, ye gods, what friend would ever,
O say, what enemy would chuse
To send me four lean *Luton Hoo's?*' *

Anstey's 'New Bath Guide,' which was written in the form of letters, and which is gravely called by his son and biographer 'a poem of the epic cast,' had, indeed, a wonderful success. Dodsley bought the second edition of it for 200*l.*, and that sum, or a large portion of it, was given by the author to the hospital at Bath. This was the more creditable to Mr. Anstey as his family was then so large that he declared a small army

* Horses so called, which his friend had been commissioned to buy for him at Luton, in Bedfordshire.

might be moved with less difficulty and expense than could his household. As a whole, the 'New Bath Guide' is a poor, a vulgar, and an indelicate production; yet it is impossible to read without a smile the following description of the famous promenade at Bath, in which the *beau monde* of that age so greatly delighted:—

'And of all the fine sights I have seen, my dear mother,
I never expect to behold such another.
How the ladies did giggle and set up their clacks,
All the while an old woman was rubbing their backs;
Oh! t'was pretty to see them all put on their flannels,
And then take the water, like so many spaniels,
And tho' all the while it grew hotter and hotter,
They swam, just as if they were hunting an otter.
'Twas a glorious sight to behold the fair sex,
All wading, with gentlemen, up to their necks,
And view them so prettily tumble and sprawl,
In a great smoking kettle as big as our hall.
And to-day, many persons of rank and condition,
Were boil'd by command of an able physician.
Dean Spavin, Dean Mangey, and Doctor De Squirt,
Were all sent from Cambridge to rub off their dirt.
Judge Bane, and the worthy old Counsellor Pest,
Join'd issue at once, and went in with the rest,
And this they all said was exceedingly good
For strengthening the spirits and mending the blood.'

The doctors, be it remarked, wisely kept out of this undignified ablution themselves.

'But, what is surprising, no mortal e'er view'd,
Any one of the physical gentlemen stew'd,
Since the day that King Bladud first found out these bogs,
And thought them so good for himself and his hogs.
Not one of the faculty ever has tried
These excellent waters to cure his own hide;
Though many a skilful and learned physician,
With candour, good sense, and profound erudition
Obliges the world with the fruits of his brain,
Their nature and hidden effects to explain.'

We are surely improved somewhat since those times when

a poem, of which the following lines form a specimen, could command edition after edition, and even be translated into French :—

'O, the charming party's made,
Some to walk the South parade,
Some to Lincomb's shady groves,
Or to Simpson's proud alcoves,
Some for chapel trip away,
Then take places for the play;
Or, we walk about in pattens,
Buying gauzes, cheapening satins;
Or to Painter's we repair,
Meet Sir Peregrine Hatchet there.
Pleas'd the artist's skill to trace
In his dear Miss Gorgon's face.
Happy pair! who fix'd as fate,
For the sweet connubial state,
Smile in canvass *tête-à-tête.*

'Thus enjoy we every blessing,
Till the toilet calls to dressing.
Where's my garnet, cap, and sprig?
Send for Singe to dress my wig.
Bring my silvered mazarine,
Sweetest gown that e'er was seen,
Tabitha, put on my ruff,
Where's my dear delightful muff?'

Yes,—we hope times are changed since Anstey, faithful as a guide, could justly paint such a state of society as then formed the supreme *bon ton* of that place.

See the life of a young Bath beau, in those effeminate, half-foreign days—and let us acknowledge that no youth of our present time would endure such a display without disgust :—

'Thank heaven! of late, my dear mother, my face is,
Not a little regarded at all public places.
For I ride in a chair, with my hands in a muff,
And have bought a silk coat, and embroidered the cuff;
But the weather was cold, and the coat it was thin,
So the tailor's advised me to line it with skin:
But what with my *Nivernois* hat can compare,
Bag-wig, and lac'd ruffles, and black *solitaire*?

And what can a true man of fashion denote,
Like an ell of good ribbon tied under the throat?
My buckles and box are in exquisite taste,
The one is of paper, the other of paste.
And sure no Camayeu was ever yet seen
Like that which I purchased at Wicksted's machine,
My stockings of silk are just come from the hosier,
For to-night I'm to dance with the charming Miss Tozer.'

The 'New Bath Guide' was published in 1766; nearly twenty years later, George Colman the Younger, the author of 'Random Records' and of 'Broad Grins,' rushed, as he expresses it himself, 'into early publicity.' The annals of this reckless man's misspent life may be sought for in green-room anecdotes, and in the most desultory adventures. Intended by his father for a barrister, George Colman kept a few Terms at Lincoln's Inn by eating oysters, a custom he supposes to be derived from the fable, and truly emblematical of the law student's practice: the whole process consisting in swallowing up the fish and leaving the shells. Oysters (be it remarked, for the benefit of unlearned readers) are served up on wooden trenchers, instead of plates, before dinner. Eating oysters is regarded as valid a way of eating your Terms as if you swallowed a whole dinner.

Supplied with certain second-hand moveables,—a tent bedstead, two tables, and a carpet, as 'much too scanty for the boards as Sheridan's rivulet of rhyme for its meadow of margin,' George was told by his father that he 'must labour hard, and work out his fortune.' After delivering this injunction, the elder Colman left town on a party of pleasure. Immediately after his father's departure, the hopeful youth set off for Gretna Green with a young actress, named Morris, to whom he was there married.

Henceforth George Colman's career was almost wholly dramatic. Jekyll lived on the same staircase. Cowper had been an early friend of Colman's, and still, at times, these dissimilar spirits held intercourse with each other; but whilst Cowper

was laboriously translating Homer at Olney, Colman was manager of the Haymarket. His father, once the delight of the theatrical world, as the famed author of 'The Clandestine Marriage,' was now in a decline, mental and bodily; yet still there were glimpses of the old wit. Andrews and Miles, two persevering poetical pests, as Colman calls them, were met one day by the father and son near Soho Square. Each of these men, dramatic authors, had sent a manuscript play to the elder Colman. As they passed him they cried out, 'Remember, Colman, I am first oar!' 'Humph,' muttered the manager, walking on, 'they may talk about first oars, but they have not a skull between them.'

George Colman's reputation was not secured without trouble. He laboured incessantly to secure the reputation of a wit. He would sacrifice a friend, and provoke an enemy to gain notoriety for his *bon mots*. He even ran the risk of affronting royalty,—though royalty was not easily affronted in those days. After being appointed lieutenant of the King's body-guard, he went to pay his respects at the drawing-room to George the Fourth. The King seemed pleased to see him. 'Your uniform, George, is so well made,' he said, 'that I don't see the hooks and eyes.' On which Colman, unhooking his eyes, said, 'Here are my eyes,—where are yours?'

Turning to the Duke of Wellington, who was gold stick in waiting, the King said, 'George Colman puts me in mind of Pam.' 'If that is the case,' cried Colman, 'the only difference between the Duke of Wellington and me is, that I am the hero of loo—he of Waterloo.'

These ready, but not very brilliant repartees, remind one of the privileged fools accepted at court by the Tudor and Stuart monarchs. When Regent, one day, at the table of George the Fourth, the host said, 'Why, Colman, you're older than I am.' 'Oh no, sir,' cried George, 'I could not take the liberty of coming into the world before your Royal Highness.' The manner in which these well-known repartees,

by the author of 'Broad Grins,' were uttered gave them that piquancy. Mr. Peake, his biographer, tells us that 'first came a roll of the largest and brightest eyes imaginable; then an "inimitable chuckle" of his voice: and an almost interminable burst of laughter succeeded his own jokes, and gave a sort of dramatic zest to the display. John Fawcett, the actor, used, Colman declared, to spoil his own best anecdotes by preliminary laughter; but Colman's mirth came after the lightning of his wit had had its play, and was always contagious.' His career was unsatisfactory, but he died penitent, patient, and grateful for the domestic happiness which he had enjoyed with the best of wives. His intellect was spared to the last. 'Never,' said the late General Phipps, who visited him in those last days, 'have I enjoyed his society more; he is more witty and intellectual than ever.'

Whatever had been the thoughtless tenour of Colman's life, he exercised one important function conscientiously. When he was appointed Examiner of Plays, he cut out, with unsparing hand, everything that could license an address to the Deity, in any shape whatever. 'Oh, Providence!' he said, was an address to the providence of God, and ought to be omitted. On one occasion, he observed: 'The phrase, Oh, heaven! Ye heavens! occurs seven times in this piece: omit them.' Though perpetually swearing himself, he would not permit an oath on the stage; he even objected to a lover calling his mistress an 'angel.' An angel, he said, was a character in Scripture, and not to be profaned on the stage by being applied to a woman.

Little has been known of the private life of Dr. Walcot, who wrote under the name of Peter Pindar; and that little furnishes the usual annals of improvidence, recklessness, and penury, which fill up so many chronicles of gifted imprudence. His portraits depict him as a comely, almost handsome man, with something of grave satire on his well-formed features. His 'Ode to the Reviewers,' with which his Poems are prefaced, is very clever, very coarse, and very

characteristic of the needy poet who wrote, and of the hard-worked and hungry critics whom he thus, in pretended amity, apostrophizes :—

'My works condemned, the Muse with grief will groan,
The censure dire my lantern jaws will rue,
Know! I have teeth and stomach like your own,
And that I wish to eat as well as you.

'I never said, like murderers in their dens,
Ye secret met in cloud-capp'd garret high,
With hatchets, scalping knives, in shape of pens,
To bid, like Mohocks, hapless authors, die.

'Nor said, (in your Reviews, together strung)
The limbs of butcher's writers, cheek by jowl,
Look'd like the legs of flies on cobwebs hung,
Before the hungry spider's greedy hole.'

These slight notices of humorists, whose works belong rather to the nineteenth than the eighteenth century, are intended rather as connecting links between the different literati of that day, than as close commentaries on the works of those brothers in arms, though not in friendship, Anstey, Colman, and Walcot.

Willingly would we dilate much longer on the biography of Laurence Sterne, if of that biography more was known than the bare outline which alone remains of his history. It had its events, we may be assured: and of this we are certain, that it had its errors, and that retribution ensued. His letters and his sermons furnish the best indications of his character: both are little known; yet his sermons, especially, deserve to be republished, and require to be, perhaps, re-edited. Few persons perhaps, in the present day, have ever seen them: few would associate with the author of 'Tristram Shandy' those earnest, and sometimes eloquent compositions, of which he gave a specimen in his famous 'Sermon on Conscience,' in that very work. Sterne's sermons are like himself,—original, fearless, pointed, but unequal. The student of divinity will find little in them to improve him. The churchman will dis-

cover no justification of doctrinal points, with which the careless Sterne seems never to have troubled himself: but the broken spirited, the waverers between right and wrong in every-day matters, will discover in those rapid effusions, full of unexpected turns, much to console, and something to elevate as well as to strengthen the heart. They would still form an excellent addition to Paley's and to Kingley's 'Village Sermons.'

Sterne complains, in his preface to the two little volumes of his sermons, that they had not sold well. Neither can we wonder. His character was not such as to recommend his discourses to the serious; and from them alone could encouragement be expected.

Born at Clonmel, in the south of Ireland, he derived from his fatherland the gaiety of heart, the improvidence, the quick sensibilities, the infirm resolution, which characterize the majority of those agreeable islanders. Yet, by inheritance, he had every right to solemn, earnest, and powerful traits of mind and heart. His father, Roger Sterne, was the son of Dr. Sterne, Archbishop of York, to whose pen has been ascribed that matchless work 'The Whole Duty of Man.' There exists, it is true, no proof of its being the production of Dr. Sterne: but that it was attributed to that prelate shows that he must have borne the highest character for Christian wisdom and Christian eloquence.

Perhaps, like many others, Laurence Sterne undervalued family literature: at all events, he seems to have known as little of the 'Whole Duty of Man' as most men of his time. For it was not alone in early life that Sterne affronted every principle of his right reverend grandfather. The character that rights itself in maturer life ought not to be viewed with harshness. Few men can give a good account of themselves between sixteen and six-and-twenty; most have some poignant regrets to sear over before they can face man or woman, or can cast a stone at others. But Sterne seems to have been all his life more of a libertine than a moralist.

He was sent in 1722, being then nine years of age, to school at Halifax, in Yorkshire: and thence, ten years later, to Cambridge. Jesus College, with its old monastic quadrangle, was the easy-going college which his friends chose for him. He passed through the usual course; and being the grandson of an Archbishop, and the nephew of a Prebendary of York Cathedral, had no difficulty, unhappily for himself and others, in being ordained. His taste, one would suppose from his works, would have led him to the army. Hardships might have fortified his character: the life of a churchman was in those days often adopted because it was supposed to be the easiest profession to enter, the laziest career to perform. The sectarianism existing in the very church itself, had absolved the careless from those duties which do themselves as much good as they produce in others. Daily services, the observance of fasts and festivals, and all sacred rites, were put aside for the hunting field and the card table; clerical duties were secondary, and the 'cure of souls' was an old-fashioned term, and meant only that a man had seated himself down in a comfortable and not over responsible position.

Sterne was, of course, quickly provided for: the 'Whole Duty of Man' had gone out of his family when the pious Archbishop died; and the uncle of Laurence, the York Prebendary, gave him at once the living of Sutton. At the age of twenty-seven, the reverend Laurence married: then he was also made a Prebend of York, by the interest of his uncle, with whom he was then on good terms. But soon afterwards, the bitterest enmity arose between them; Sterne declaring that it was excited because he refused 'to become a party man, or to write paragraphs in the newspapers to please his relative and patron.'

He passed his days, however, pleasantly enough; shooting, painting, fiddling, and books, being his chief recreations.

He also occupied himself in composing one of the most

fascinating, witty, and dangerous works that has ever been penned in the English language. It is fascinating from its nature and truth. Its wit is like no other man's wit. It is dangerous because, interwoven with an apparent simplicity of narrative, is an insidious indelicacy, which it almost requires a commentary to point out; an indelicacy which never sullied one page of Goldsmith, and from which our great Scott would have shrunk in disgust. Take away this taint, if it be possible to do so, and 'Tristram Shandy' is full of exquisite home scenes, and of touching incidents, and noble sentiments. It must do any heart good to contemplate my Uncle Toby and the Corporal; Yorick is a being not yet died out in remote country villages,—and though we cannot accept it as a true portraiture of Sterne himself, we see him, we know him, we feel for him. 'My mother' is inimitable; 'my father'—the true bashaw English husband, captious of every right, and tenacious of every opinion—is excellent; down to the fat scullion—the limning, which seems, as we read on, so slight, is perfect: there is not a touch too many.

Sterne's 'Tristram Shandy' has always been a favourite with elderly gentlemen of the last-century principles: but by strict judges of style he was unsparingly condemned. Amongst these was the Reverend Dr. Gregory, of East Ham, in Essex, the translator of Bishop Lowth's Lectures on Hebraic poetry. 'No classic,' Dr. Gregory wrote to Miss Seward, 'could endure Sterne's style.' He even denied Sterne's originality. 'These assertions more than surprize, they astonish me,' answers the enthusiastic Anna. 'What! that imagination which I have always thought of, as having such exquisite, such original colouring! that penetration, which seems to have an hundred eyes with which to look into the human heart! That happy, thrice happy mixture of the humorous and the pathetic, in which he stands alone amongst all other writers out of the dramatic scale; resembling none; and whom not one, amongst his numerous imitators, have at-

tempted to copy without proving, by their total failure, the difficulty of acquiring a manner so singularly, so curiously original. Like ether, its spirit is too subtle and volatile to become the vehicle of any other person's ideas. And then, that frolic fancy! that all atoning wit! that style which my ear finds so natural, easy, animated, and eloquent! How could you thus scorn them?'*

For once, it seems, the heart gave a better criticism than the head; and the impulsive, enthusiastic woman evinced a truer discrimination than the man of learning.

Miss Seward then asks, 'Who are they from whom Sterne has borrowed?' Swift, she declares, may in some points resemble him; but Swift, she truly adds, had none of the pathos of Sterne. Swift and Rabelais, both of whom he had been accused of copying, never, she justly declares, interest the affections; while Sterne guides, turns, and precipitates them into any channel he pleases. 'His sub-acid philosopher,' she allows, was suggested by the 'Martinerus Scriblerus' of Pope, Arbuthnot, and Swift (in the same manner as the character of Pisistratus' father, in 'The Caxtons,' derives its origin from Sterne's work); but the 'hypothesis-monger,' as she calls the sub-acid philosopher, she holds to be far more natural, and probable, and exquisitely humorous than Pope's Scriblerus. And then, she observes: 'Neither can we conceive that Martinerus Scriblerus ever existed; while Shandy's pedantry and systematic absurdities are natural living manners,—he is of our acquaintance; we sit at table with him.'

Still Dr. Gregory was not convinced. He talked of the Commodore Trunnion of Smollett, and compared Toby Shandy to him. Miss Seward had forgotten the character of Trunnion: but she thought—and we think the same—'that years could not efface the image of the generous Uncle Toby,—by whose absurdities we are betrayed into laughter; by whose virtues we are melted to tears.'

* Seward's Letters, vol. i. p. 375.

Slop—inimitable Slop—comes before her. 'Where could her antagonist show her his prototype? And O! the acute angle of the garden-wall!—Obadiah!—the coach-horse!—the mud!—the Doctor and his pony!'* That story alone effaced, she thought, every possible comparison with Smollett and his works; and we are cordially ready to agree with her. We sympathise in her real enjoyment.

There is, in fact, one episode in 'Tristram Shandy' that has never been equalled, and perhaps never will, in fiction, be surpassed. It is the story of Le Fevre; so mournfully simple, so tragical in incident, so exquisitely related, that if the head can criticise it, the heart cannot cease to feel its pathos. It is a common story enough, an incident of war—and war was the talk of Sterne's day, for we were rarely then at peace. But it is the bursting agony of my Uncle Toby's brave heart that brings the tears, and fixes for ever Trim's tale in our memory.

Many years after Sterne's death, the question which Miss Seward had asked, 'From whom did he borrow?' was answered. Dr. Ferriar, in his comments on Sterne, in the fourth volume of the 'Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester,' proves that in 'Tristram Shandy' Sterne borrowed both matter and manner from Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' a work valued by every great thinker, yet little read, and seldom to be met with in ordinary libraries; for we reprint, and even illustrate, many inferior books; and this, the delight of all who can appreciate originality, is neglected, if not forgotten.

Whilst we may admit that many of 'my Father's' speculations may be borrowed from Burton, Sterne's humour and his pathos were his own. Yorick, Le Fevre, Uncle Toby, Trim, are not to be met with in Burton. Still he had many detractors; and Miss Seward could only console herself with the reflection, that even the ablest men differed in taste.

* Vol. ii. p. 184.

Gray could not appreciate the 'Nouvelle Heloise' (we should wonder if the Fellow of a College could do so); Mason was captivated by its genius. Mason could not see the merits of 'Ossian,' but called it a bombastic imposition on the public; Gray, on the other hand, idolized those poems of Macpherson.

Soon after his marriage, Sterne was presented, by his wife's interest, to the living of Stillington: he remained, however, nearly twenty years at Sutton, doing duty at both places. In 1760 he went to London; thence, in 1762, to the south of France, where he wrote his 'Sentimental Journey.' It is far inferior in merit to 'Tristram Shandy,' yet displays genius of a high order. These works, his letters, his sermons, are all by which Sterne's great name has been established—but they are enough.

There is also another work, doubtful in its authenticity, yet bearing strong internal evidence of being Sterne's. These are his 'Letters to Eliza.'

Eliza was by birth an East Indian, and the wife of a Mr. Draper, who held a high official situation in India. She had visited England for her health; and Sterne, having become one of her most intimate associates, brought much of his false and pernicious sentiment into their friendship. Eliza returned to India, taking with her a wonderfully speaking likeness of Sterne; with that half-smile on his sensual face that plays upon his wide full mouth, and lights up his features. The glance of his eye is peculiarly arch and significant; and not even the full-bottomed clerical wig could make him look reverend. That picture found its way back to England again. Mr. Draper was perfectly aware of all that had passed between his wife and Sterne; but in Eliza's grave, for she died two years after her return to India, the past was forgiven, if not forgotten. The picture was given to a friend of Mr. Draper's, and was hung in his dining-room. One day, when Mr. Draper dined with his

friend, he was observed to give a long, grave look at the picture of Sterne. His host seeing this, took care to remove the portrait whenever he had to welcome the injured husband again to his house. A vacant space was thus left; but Mr. Draper never failed to look round at it, to see if the lineaments of his former rival were still visible.

Sterne was the victim of consumption. After braving the disease for some time, for his spirits never flagged, he died in the south of France, 1768, at the age of fifty-five. In his letters, great interest is expressed by him for the comfort and health of his wife and daughter. There is little known that is valuable or interesting as showing the state of mind of this gifted but unsatisfactory being.

The works of Mrs. Radcliffe, the justly celebrated authoress of the 'Mysteries of Udolpho,' and the 'Old English Baron' of Clara Reeve, come under the head of Romantic Literature, rather than that which is intended to cast a light on domestic life, or on manners, or on popular amusements.

The 'Life and Letters of Horace Walpole' we have already reviewed. His romance, 'The Castle of Otranto,' and his play, 'The Mysterious Mother,' were the chief productions of his earlier life; and his Letters were published during the present century.

Even during the last century, women were establishing their reputation as novelists. 'It would be impossible,' Sir Walter Scott declared, 'to match against certain names, the same number of masculine competitors, arising within the same space of time.'

Perhaps there is no novel in our language more perfect in its own style than Mrs. Inchbald's 'Simple Story.' The main character of the tale, Doriforth, the young Roman Catholic priest, is drawn from life; and John Kemble, the great tragedian, was said to be its model. Mr. Boaden, in his biography of Mrs. Inchbald, has described her visit to the Kemble family; where Mrs. Siddons, bearing with heroic

firmness her failure on the stage, was alternately preparing herself for a second attempt, and attending to the duties of her family; ironing her clothes, and bending in stately form to the household duties which her humble fortunes rendered essential. Mrs. Inchbald, meantime, was contemplating the young, handsome, and studious John Kemble, who was then preparing to enter into orders as a Romanist priest. Sandford, Miss Woodley, and above all, the heroine, are masterly characters, each consistent throughout the whole of this interesting and touching story: and there is a dash of superstition hovering over the hasty marriage, and the mourning ring, that adds inexpressibly to the excitement with which the reader is hurried on. No other production of Mrs. Inchbald's—not even her plays—present so much dramatic power as the 'Simple Story.'

Among the almost forgotten writers of the last century was Charlotte Smith. There is, perhaps, a deficiency in the plots of her novels—which, with the exception of the 'Orphan of the Castle,' are hurried and unconnected. This defect is ascribed by the kind-hearted Sir Walter Scott to the 'inexorable necessity of the daily supply of the press,' before her materials were well arranged for her task. For how many authors might not the same plea be urged! Her best work is the 'Old Manor House,' a novel which fastens itself upon one's youthful imagination in spite of reason. We should now find it, we fear, tedious and improbable, somewhat high-flown in sentiment, though broken and enlivened with admirable descriptions of scenery.

Mrs. Smith, in private life, was eminently unfortunate. Well born,—well married, according to the notions of her friends,—the mother of a large family,—she was united to an improvident and selfish man, from whom eventually she separated, trusting to her pen for a great portion of her maintenance, and for that of her children. She has, however, lost much of our sympathy, by describing her husband in her

works with bitterness and sarcasm. Whatever one may be betrayed into saying, in the angry discussions of private life, one should never employ the pen as a vehicle of hatred, or in reference to family quarrels.

The novels of Miss Austin, incomparable in their way, belong too nearly to our own time to be here analyzed. They opened a fresh path in literature; and proved what a great writer, in reference to the superiority of women in the domestic novel, has stated,—that the less evanescent shades of modern society are more happily painted by the fine pencil of a woman than by a masculine hand.

CHAPTER XII.

ORIGIN OF THE EDINBURGH AND QUARTERLY REVIEWS.—THEIR RESPECTIVE CHARACTERS AND PRINCIPLES.—SYDNEY SMITH, JEFFREY, BROUGHAM, HORNER, MURRAY, &c.—THE EFFECT PRODUCED BY THE APPEARANCE OF THE 'EDINBURGH REVIEW.'—EDINBURGH SOCIETY SIXTY YEARS AGO.—LORD COCKBURN; HIS LIFE OF JEFFREY.—JEFFREY AND SOUTHEY.—MRS. GRANT OF LAGGAN; HER 'LETTERS FROM THE MOUNTAINS.'—MRS. ELIZABETH HAMILTON; HER 'COTTAGERS OF GLENBURNIE.'—WILLIAM GIFFORD; HIS BIRTH AND EARLY STRUGGLES.—THE 'QUARTERLY REVIEW.'—INCREASE OF NEWSPAPERS.—CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER XII.

'THE old periodical opiates,' as Lord Cockburn, in his Life of Lord Jeffrey, styles the periodicals of the last century, consisted chiefly of the 'European Magazine,' one of the earliest and the most frivolous; of the 'Gentleman's Magazine;' of the 'Critical Review;' and the 'Monthly Review.' Most of these are extinct; and most, we must think with Lord Cockburn, deserve to be so,—the 'Gentleman's Magazine' forming an exception.

It was in the eighth or ninth story of a flat in Buccleugh Place, Edinburgh, that Sydney Smith, meeting there, in the chambers of Francis Jeffrey, sundry young advocates and writers, proposed that they should set up a Review. This was acceded to with acclamation.

It was a stormy evening when Sydney Smith first announced his project for what Lord Cockburn calls that 'Pillar of Fire' which moved through the land of benighted dulness. Many jokes were passed at the far greater storm which the literary incendiaries were to raise. These conspirators were composed of ten persons, whose weapons were pen and paper. Of these all are dead, it is believed by the writer of this work, except Lord Brougham, and the learned antiquary, Thomas Thomson, of Edinburgh.

And in no respect did this 'Pillar of Fire,' in its progress, do

more good than to light or social literature. Assigning it its due place, it castigated, refined, and yet encouraged it; and an impulse has thus been given to fiction, to essay writing, to gay and fanciful writing, that has rendered our young less dependent on external amusements than in former days, and that has afforded unmeasurable solace to the old. With the extension of literature in its pleasant form of fiction, or poetry, or detached papers in periodicals, cards have gone out of vogue; homes are happier; minds are purer, if not stronger, than in the days of our ancestors. An honourable ambition for distinction has been diffused throughout the higher orders of society. Since the aristocratic circles are mostly readers, they must also be mostly writers. Composition is one of a woman's best resources in times of sorrow, or in pecuniary difficulties. It is an occupation in which, the Public being the judge, no unfairness can mar, no rank, no interest advance the prospects which are open to all. An unknown, secluded authoress wrote 'Jane Eyre,' and achieved, with scarcely one personal friend in the world out of her own family, a splendid reputation. From the pen of another obscure authoress came forth 'Adam Bede;' and a halo, perhaps more brilliant than that which encircled the head of Charlotte Bronte, shines around the unknown resplendent genius, which is still spared to gain more and more triumphs.

It was at first resolved that the writers in the 'Edinburgh' were to work without remuneration. 'It was to be all gentlemen, and no pay.'* But the common sense of Sydney Smith soon set this error in its right point of view before Mr. Constable, the publisher. 'If you will give two hundred a year to your Editor, and ten guineas a sheet,' he wrote to Constable, 'you will secure the best Review in Europe.' The gentlemen who first engaged in this Review will find it too laborious for pleasure: as labour, I am sure

* Lord Cockburn's 'Memoirs of Jeffrey,' p. 134.

they will not meddle with it for a less sum.' It was fair enough, he added, 'that a bookseller should guide the public to his own shop—Everyone for himself, God for all;—and fair enough that a critic should tell the public they are going astray.'

A band of young enthusiasts thereupon stood up and applauded Sydney. Lord Brougham was then a student at the University of Edinburgh, over which his maternal uncle, Dr. Robertson, had been principal. Tall, eager, rapid, listened to by all, beloved by all, feared by some, how must his rich voice have moved all who heard it, as with an eloquence that has survived even the long lapse of years since that night of tempest in the close of the eighteenth century, he applauded Sydney. How sound must have been Horner's comments! how sportive Smith's! How pregnant with information those of Murray, and Thomas Thomson!

As the discussion goes on, all eyes turn on a small spare form, with eyes that glistened as if some dark pebble were set on fire; his close-cut hair standing straight up over a noble forehead; with sharp, well-formed features, and a compressed mouth, pleasant to look at in repose—fearfully sarcastic when its smile became visible. How must they all have turned to him, where he stood, his arms tightly crossed over his chest,—and pointed to him with exultation as their leader. It was a proud moment; and for a plodding, anxious lawyer, too—for one who had known, what all barristers seem to know full well, that gaunt fiend, despair—it was a moment decisive of his destinies. Every sound in that room must have been hushed; nothing heard save the pattering rain; nothing seen but Jeffrey's eyes, flashing lightning within, whilst without the lightning played; and the measured, distinct, accents of a voice, somewhat feeble in its first accents, is heard. A young man, nearly in stature as short as Jeffrey, presses forward to listen to him who is called by acclamation that night to be the 'Editor of the new

Review.' If Jeffrey's eyes looked bright to you before, they are dimmed by the blaze of those large, lustrous, deep, hazel luminaries, which now sparkle with generous pleasure as Jeffrey speaks. Such eyes, so noble a brow, with its brown hair thinly scattered; so symmetrical a profile, so expressive a mouth, so fine and glowing a complexion; such a combination of manly dignity and beauty,—were never before seen, nor since, as were combined in the face of that short, slight, active youth, Sydney Smith.

And thus was the 'Edinburgh Review' proposed, conceived, and decided upon. 'Its effect,' we are told by him who was amongst its projectors, 'was electrical.'*

Scarcely can we conceive it now, when the excitement of politics has nearly died out, and when the attention of the public is so diffused that, unless some very salient point were canvassed, many persons, lovers of light literature alone, would scarcely cut up the pages of that blue and yellow tome.

But in 1802, when the first number of the Review appeared, a great portion of its pages was devoted to the 'Literature of Society.' With the higher aims of the journal, with the wit and learning, the science, the political economy, and with the dawn of that 'brighter day' which reflective men discerned as one of the remote consequences of this great publication, we have little to do. It is impossible for those who did not live at the time, and in the heart of the scene, to feel, or almost to understand, the impression made by the new luminary, or the anxieties with which its motions were observed. It was an entire and instant change of everything that the public had been accustomed to, in that sort of composition. The learning of the new journal, the wit, and, above all, the independence, were all new.

* Lord Cockburn's Memoirs, p. 131.

The remuneration was afterwards raised to twenty-five guineas a sheet. Of the first number Sydney Smith was virtually the Editor, although the reins were afterwards given up to Jeffrey. Smith strongly enforced the maintenance of an incognito; and on that account, 'dark divans' were held at the printer's office, in Craig's Close, where the articles were read over and remarked upon, and judgment passed upon those sent by strangers. It must have been almost a sterner ordeal than that of an appearance before the public. Scotchmen never spare each other. It was soon found too tiresome to continue these dark interviews; and a responsible Editor was chosen in the person of Jeffrey. The first three numbers of the 'Edinburgh' were given to the publisher: after that Constable took all risks and paid all expenses.

Soon after the outset of the Review, Jeffrey is found lamenting the probable dispersion of all the coterie. Sydney Smith removed to London; Horner went to the English bar; Lord Webb Seymour, a brother of the late Duke of Somerset, the particular friend of Horner and of Professor Playfair, and all of 'that calm cast,' died in 1819; John Allen was located in Holland House; and Lord Brougham was soon established in public life.

The Edinburgh Reviewers formed a distinct and marked sect,—strong Whiggism their bond of union. They were despised by the old Tories, and viewed with horror by the young. A genuine horror was felt in all country parsonages in England for their political and religious faith. But they were young and ardent; and those days of turmoil were days of happiness. However hard their morning's work, the joyous, witty party became boys in the evening, when, after a walk, they met at Jeffrey's or at Cockburn's, or Murray's, at supper. Let it not be supposed that these famed suppers were delicate and delicious, like the *petits soupers* in the days of Saint Simon, or of Madame de Stael. They were substantial banquets, with hot dishes, and boiling water, toddy and

plotty, and stoups of claret, and bottles of Edinburgh ale, and every incentive to jollity and headaches that old custom could devise; of course they have long since been condemned as vulgar.

The clique was first broken into by Horner's departure—leaving to Jeffrey his Bar wig. The article never fitted Jeffrey,—for he and his wig were always, we are told, on bad terms; and at length, in despair of coming to any amicable arrangement with *any* wig, he sat almost in solitary peculiarity in his own black and bushy hair, in the Parliament House.

It is difficult not to linger in the haunts of those to whom good taste, and all that brightens life owe so much, and where friendships so rare, and enmities so tempered with generosity, had place. There was then still something metropolitan, something left of old official state, something even aristocratic, that distinguished Edinburgh from a provincial town. Picturesque corners there were, where a few of the old Scottish nobility lived in mansions almost historical; and many of them remembered the Prince, Charles Edward, and the lovely Miss Walkinshaw, and all that sad romance by which his career was degraded. Many English families took up their abode in the town, or sent their sons to college there. Amongst the rest, Lord Palmerston and the Marquis of Lansdowne studied under the famous Dugald Stewart; and some of the few happy days permitted to Lord Dudley and Ward were spent in Edinburgh. 'The war,' says Lord Cockburn, 'made us bright with uniforms, and strangers, and shows.'

Such was Edinburgh at the beginning of the present century. Scott was living in Castle Street; and, indeed, till after 1820, old Henry Mackenzie, the author of the 'Man of Feeling,' might be seen,—old, nearly blind, but active; the perfect gentleman in demeanour, driving in and out of the city in his old-fashioned chariot,—a link between the past and present.

But those days are now the past; and the glories of Edinburgh are recorded on stone, instead of being visible in flesh and blood. Even the remembrance of that fair spot, where Lord Cockburn declared he had for many years found true happiness—even Bonaly and the green Pentland Slopes, are changed, and own a stranger's rule.

In that home—the house, composed mainly of one large Norman tower, designed by Playfair,—Henry Cockburn, then a Lord of Session, assembled round him, year after year, in what he called his Carnival, the scattered remnant of the original band of Edinburgh Reviewers, and of old playmates, and college friends. There, in vacation times, and, seated on a crag, near to the plashing of a burn, or traversing the grass terrace-walks of Bonaly, he recalled the early days of effort, though not of struggle:—a successful man always recalls them with satisfaction. It was pleasant to see him and Lord Jeffrey, both in the full fruition of early hopes; both Judges, yet both, embued as they were with the deepest earnestness of character, gifted with the mad spirits of boys; it was pleasant to know that they had done the great work of their lives, and were resting, though employed, after the up-hill toil.

Lord Jeffrey's career had not been, in literary matters, a serene one. In his later years he bade adieu to Reviews, and took to the milder delights of a country life. Who, in his English-looking, green, flowery, sheltered home at Craig Crook, could assent to Southey's somewhat bitter description of their first, and perhaps last interview?

Jeffrey was resolved, on his part, to let Southey see his review of Madoc, before he put himself in the way of meeting him. 'He is too much a man of the world, I believe, in spite of his poesy, to decline seeing me, whatever he may think of the critic.' They met; and Southey, unappeased, left the following scornful notice of the interview:

'I have seen Jeffrey, &c. I met him in a good humour, being, by God's blessing, of a happy temper. Having seen

him, it would be impossible to be angry with anything so diminutive. We talked upon the question of taste, on which we are at issue: he is a mere child upon that subject. I never met with a man whom it was so easy to check-mate.'

Jeffrey confessed to having treated the Lake Poets ill. Blaming, and exposing faults became his second nature; but he was perfectly incapable of malice, though of a disposition the most satirical in the world. Everyone knows the famous anecdote of Lady Scott begging him to carve a turkey at table, as he 'was very good at cutting up.' Yet the most perfect good-feeling subsisted between him and Scott. When Scott wrote, in 1817, to ask him to visit him at Abbotsford, he said: 'I am like one of Miss Edgeworth's heroines, master of all things in miniature,—a little hill and a little glen, and a little horse-pond of a loch, and a little river—I was going to call it the Tweed, but I remember the minister was mobbed by his parishioners for terming it, in his statistical report, an inconsiderable stream,—so pray do come and see me.'

This friendly letter, written in so genial a spirit, is creditable to both. A few years previously they had had misunderstandings, and explanations. But, in the course of life, circumstances bring together even the most unwilling messmates.

From 1803 to 1814, Edinburgh had become a camp, and all parties joined in volunteering. 'Professors wheeled in the college area: the side-arms and the uniform peeped from behind the gown at the Bar, or even on the Bench; and the parade and the review formed the staple of men's talk and thoughts.'

Brougham 'served the same gun' in a company of artillery with Playfair: James Graham, the author of the 'Sabbath,' walked in the same company of riflemen with the late Sir Charles Bell; Francis Horner walked about the streets with a musket, being a private in the Gentlemen's Regiment;

Lord Cockburn, a gallant captain, he tells us, 'commanded ninety-two of his fellow-creatures from 1804 to 1814;' and Walter Scott was the 'very soul of the Edinburgh troop of the Midlothian Yeomanry Cavalry.' His troop used to practise with the sabre at a turnip, which was stuck on the top of a staff, to represent a Frenchman in front of the line; and Sir Walter, when aiming at the imaginary enemy, used to prick forth gallantly, exclaiming, 'Cut them down, the villains! Cut them down!' 'He drilled, he drank, and made songs, with a hearty conscientious earnestness which inspired or shamed everybody within the attraction.' And thus engaged, the reviewers and the reviewed suspended for a time the consciousness of mutual injuries.

How agreeable must have been this active interlude in those pledged to continual intellectual labours. Lord Cockburn, in 1811, had married, and set up his household gods at Bonaly, where, he says in his 'Memorials of his Time,' 'human nature is incapable of enjoying more happiness than has been my lot here. I have been too happy; and often tremble at the anticipation that the cloud must come at last.'

These words were written in that picturesque library in which Lord Cockburn used to sit amid his family, writing; his books—well cared for, but often generously lent, and even given—all around him; and the grassy walks, the delicious parterres of his formal garden, visible from every window, whilst above them rose the Pentlands, every recess of which in the valleys, every eminence on their summits, 'were familiar to his solitude.'

Edinburgh, he tells us in his Memoirs, 'has never been much encumbered with literary ladies.' One 'tall, dark woman,' with a heart of unbounded benevolence, made the great wits of the Review forgive the colour she wore, which was not, all allowed, 'too blue.' This was Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, an authoress that should never be out of date

amongst us. Her 'Letters from the Mountains' are styled by Lord Cockburn 'an interesting treasury of good solitary thoughts.' The daughter of an officer, and married early to a Scottish minister, Mrs. Grant's life presented as continual a course of sorrow as it was ever the will of Omniscient Providence to try and to chasten a soul, and to educate it, in that stern process, for heaven. Her husband died young; five or six daughters followed in early succession to the grave, one after another, in slow, hopeless consumption. The mother as she saw the first symptoms, beheld their doom, not in despair, but in resignation. Poor, but rich in friends, Mrs. Grant, after ceasing to write, introduced and partly educated several young ladies of rank and fortune, who repaid her care by gratitude and affection. Her affectionate and delightful enthusiasm shed a glow over the close of a very protracted life. Her 'Memoirs of an American Lady' are the most interesting of her works, and acquire now a new value, because we fear the character which she describes to be for ever extinct. It is that of one of the early settlers before the war, in Albany; and it is a most truthful and beautiful picture of calm existence, and of a conscientious gentlewoman's life.

Mrs. Grant, during the zenith of Edinburgh prosperity, and in the best days of its society, received in small rooms, and on very moderate means, some of the highest society, both in rank and talent, in the northern capital. Her Life, by her son, is one of the most interesting biographies of our own times. It furnishes a lesson to grumblers; it holds out a model of fortitude and contentment under the most harrowing lot; it shows also that Mrs. Grant's cultivated intellect and literary occupations did much to sustain her and to mitigate the cankering effects of continual regret and anxiety.

Among those who gave evening parties, in the smallest of rooms, was Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton, the authoress of the

'Cottagers of Glenburnie.' She was, like Mrs. Grant, singularly plain in person; but she wore (to borrow Lord Jeffrey's expression) 'the petticoat low enough' to cover her blue stockings. The feminine character was thus not lost in the literary one. Good taste and good manners characterized this charming and excellent woman. She had the merit of being as attentive and as indulgent to the poorest of the intellects with which she happened to be commingled in society, as to the highest. In her 'Cottagers of Glenburnie' she portrayed, with admirable intention, the want of order, of cleanliness, and the consequently real unthriftiness of Scottish villagers; and every one must have admitted that her pictures were true.

Whilst Lord Jeffrey and Lord Cockburn were boys—and educated as those who are destined to work their way up to literary and forensic fame,—the future editor of the new rival Review, the 'Quarterly,' was working as an apprentice (without a fee) with a shoemaker, who had taken the starving boy on those liberal terms.

William Gifford was born at Ashburton, in Devonshire, in 1755. His father, the descendant of a respectable family, had run off to sea after his marriage, and remained there eight or nine years; and then returning, after setting up as a glazier, died at the age of forty.

Two children and a widow were left to bear the effects of this man's folly and extravagance. The elder of these was the truly great William Gifford. His mother, worn out by anxiety, died a year after her husband; and he was left to the struggling and buffetting of life. 'I was not quite thirteen,' he wrote of himself, 'when this happened; my brother was only two; and we had not a friend nor a relation in the world.'

His brother was sent to the workhouse, and his godfather, a man named Carlile, put him to school for a short time; but grew tired of the expense. He was next intended to be a

ploughboy; then destined to go out to Newfoundland to assist in a store house. For the one, the half starved orphan was found to be too delicate; for the other, too small. So he was to sink down even lower in the scale of social life. His godfather found that 'drawing the line somewhere' was a fallacy; so the child was sent, not on one of the Torbay fishing-boats, as the affectionate godfather proposed, but on a coaster, a medium course, to which the unhappy lad consented.

Such was the opening of William Gifford's career; such was the dawn of his life; such the penury-stricken childhood of that man, to whose intellect Lord Byron paid such tributes of terror and admiration. 'It will easily be believed,' Gifford wrote in after days, 'that my life was a life of hardship.' He was not only a 'ship boy on the high and giddy mast,' but, in the cabin, every menial office devolved on him. But Providence raises up kind friends everywhere to the orphan; and the women of Brixham, who used to travel twice a week with fish to Ashburton, remembered his parents; saw him running about the beach in ragged garments, and pitied him. They talked about him in their world (every one has some sort of a world), and at last the godfather was shamed into sending for him home. He was again placed at school; he there made rapid progess; he was head of the school, and became an assistant, and had even hopes of succeeding to the high office of a schoolmaster, when, cruelly, Carlile sent for him away, and placed the gifted and diligent boy—with a shoemaker!

He hated his 'new profession;' and, unable to rise to the higher parts of it, sank into a drudge. He was sinking altogether, when a young woman who had found a work on algebra in a lodging-house, gave it to him; and out of this apparent accident, that powerful intellect was elicited—its true bent discovered.

How he laboured to understand the terms of that work; how he stole 'Fenning's Introduction' from his master's son

at night, and replaced it in the morning; how, too poor even to buy pen, ink, and paper, he worked out his problems with a cobbler's awl, on pieces of leather,—would seem to us almost fabulous, had not this stern lover of truth told us himself the tale, in his own clear and forcible words.

Even during the six years in which he had been a shoemaker, the hope of better days—the goal of his ambition, the post of schoolmaster—sustained his spirits. At twenty years of age this hope vanished. The master of the Free School died, and an elder person than Gifford was appointed; and the poor young man became a victim to despondency; 'I sank,' he writes of himself, 'into a kind of corporeal torpor.'

In this depth of woe, a kind heart took pity on him. Gifford had written sundry poems, which he had sold among his companions for sixpence—a resource which had seemed to him 'a mine of wealth.' A Mr. William Cookesley, a surgeon, happened to hear some of these productions, which had passed from mouth to mouth among the mechanics of the place. Henceforth, Gifford's fortunes were in his own power. Mr. Cookesley befriended him; raised a subscription to educate him; and, in two years and two months after he left the shoemaker, Gifford was pronounced to be fit for the University. He was entered at Exeter College, Oxford; Mr. Cookesley undertaking to raise and supply him still with the means, until he should take his degree.

Such is the epitome of the narrative which Gifford prefixed to the first edition of his English version of Juvenal, published in 1802. Perhaps never before was such a narrative prefixed to such a work—a work proceeding from one who for two years had no other book, as he tells us, than 'The Coasting Pilot.' Such was his only source of knowledge between the important ages of thirteen and a half and fifteen.

Mr. Gifford died in London in 1826, in the seventy-first year of his age. He left the bulk of his fortune to the son of his first patron, the disinterested and excellent Mr. Cookesley.

That gentleman did not live to witness the success of the orphan boy whom he had succoured in the world of letters.

During Gifford's time and since, the 'Quarterly Review' has taken, amongst other matters, the 'Literature of Society' under its charge, sometimes sustaining, sometimes quenching the efforts of the trembling adventurers who may dare to brave all that an author must have to undergo, if he be either very weak or very strong. Mediocrity is safe from one of the bitterest trials of an author's life—a scornful, satirical analysis of his beloved production.

'There is no offence to an author,' says Lord Cockburn in his Life of Jeffrey, 'greater than the seeming contempt of silence, and therefore the very act of publishing is a petition for 'notice.' Those who have tried both miseries, and have been soundly set down by an influential critic, will, we think, differ from Lord Cockburn, and prefer the silence.

'Then it does so happen,' he adds, with his usual candour, 'that all human censors do prefer the discovery of faults. Excellence is more easily found out; and it leads to mere praise. But he who detects a fault shows his superiority, at least to him who committed it; and its being a fault seems to confer a free license of exposing it.'

Groaning, we acquiesce; and relieved by the half sympathy of one of the gentlest of natures, believe him when he says that when Jeffrey gave way to the love of blaming, it was from 'mere lightness of spirit.' With Gifford it was from stern, fixed, and somewhat narrow views: with Croker, from 'party spirit and the desire of writing a good article.'

'Other journals,' remarks Lord Cockburn, referring evidently to the Quarterly, 'arose. Which of them have been less cruel? which of them has exhibited the virtue for the want of which the "Edinburgh Review" was blamed? which of them has not surpassed it in all the iniquities of its justice? which of them has practised less the art of giving pain?'*

* Life of Jeffrey, vol. ii. p. 290.

The increase of newspapers, a subject connected with our theme, has conduced greatly to the extension of literature among us. Upon the origin of different papers, and on the contributors, volumes, instead of chapters, might be written. One doubts whether to rejoice or to be sad, when one reads of such men as Mackintosh, and Coleridge, eager to write for the daily journals. 'Mackintosh,' says Mr. Stuart (the former proprietor of the 'Morning Post,') 'is writing to me soliciting for him an engagement to write for the Morning Post pieces of poetry and such trifles;' Coleridge offering, in 1799, to give up his whole time to that paper. Or when we learn that at a dinner-party, Sir Richard Phillipps, the bookseller, being present, Coleridge held forth with his usual splendour, when Sir Richard, who had been listening to him with delight, came to him, and tapping him on the shoulder, said 'I wish I had you in a garret without a coat to your back!'

In those days every morning paper, we are told by Charles Lamb, as an essential retainer to its establishment, 'kept an author.' He was bound to furnish daily a certain quantity of witty paragraphs for a certain remuneration—'sixpence a joke' was Daniel Stuart's remuneration; and was thought pretty high too. Let us therefore glory in these happier days, when no one can be made to smile under an expense far more considerable even to the wholesale dealer in laughter, and when the literary career, always, to good men, honourable, has become one of the most remunerative professions to the gifted, of our times.*

* Fourth Estate, vol. iii. p. 133.

THE END.

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